

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N^o. 59.]

SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1860.

[PRICE 5 CTS.]

THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

PART THE SECOND. HARTWRIGHT'S NARRATIVE.
IV.

No circumstance of the slightest importance happened on my way to the offices of Messrs. Gilmore and Kyrle, in Chancery-lane.

While my card was being taken in to Mr. Kyrle, a consideration occurred to me which I deeply regretted not having thought of before. The information derived from Marian's diary made it a matter of certainty that Count Fosco had opened her first letter from Blackwater Park to Mr. Kyrle, and had, by means of his wife, intercepted the second. He was therefore well aware of the address of the office; and he would naturally infer that if Marian wanted advice and assistance, after Laura's escape from the Asylum, she would apply once more to the experience of Mr. Kyrle. In this case, the office in Chancery-lane was the very first place which he and Sir Percival would cause to be watched; and, if the same persons were chosen for the purpose who had been employed to follow me, before my departure from England, the fact of my return would in all probability be ascertained on that very day. I had thought, generally, of the chances of my being recognised in the streets; but the special risk connected with the office had never occurred to me until the present moment. It was too late now to repair this unfortunate error in judgment—too late to wish that I had made arrangements for meeting the lawyer in some place privately appointed beforehand. I could only resolve to be cautious on leaving Chancery-lane, and not to go straight home again under any circumstances whatever.

After waiting a few minutes, I was shown into Mr. Kyrle's private room. He was a pale, thin, quiet, self-possessed man, with a very attentive eye, a very low voice, and a very unemonstrative manner; not (as I judged) ready with his sympathy, where strangers were concerned; and not at all easy to disturb in his professional composure. A better man for my purpose could hardly have been found. If he committed himself to a decision at all, and if the decision was favourable, the strength of our case was as good as proved from that moment.

"Before I enter on the business which brings me here," I said, "I ought to warn you, Mr.

Kyrle, that the shortest statement I can make of it may occupy some little time."

"My time is at Miss Halcombe's disposal," he replied. "Where any interests of hers are concerned, I represent my partner personally as well as professionally. It was his request that I should do so, when he ceased to take an active part in business."

"May I inquire whether Mr. Gilmore is in England?"

"He is not: he is living with his relatives in Germany. His health has improved, but the period of his return is still uncertain."

While we were exchanging these few preliminary words, he had been searching among the papers before him, and he now produced from them a sealed letter. I thought he was about to hand the letter to me; but, apparently changing his mind, he placed it by itself on the table, settled himself in his chair, and silently waited to hear what I had to say.

Without wasting a moment in prefatory words of any sort, I entered on my narrative, and put him in full possession of the events which have already been related in these pages.

Lawyer as he was to the very marrow of his bones, I startled him out of his professional composure. Expressions of incredulity and surprise, which he could not repress, interrupted me several times, before I had done. I persevered, however, to the end, and, as soon as I reached it, boldly asked the one important question:

"What is your opinion, Mr. Kyrle?"

He was too cautious to commit himself to an answer, without taking time to recover his self-possession first.

"Before I give my opinion," he said, "I must beg permission to clear the ground by a few questions."

He put the questions—sharp, suspicious, unbelieving questions, which clearly showed me, as they proceeded, that he thought I was the victim of a delusion; and that he might even have doubted, but for my introduction to him by Miss Halcombe, whether I was not attempting the perpetration of a cunningly-designed fraud.

"Do you believe that I have spoken the truth, Mr. Kyrle?" I asked, when he had done examining me.

"So far as your own convictions are concerned, I am certain you have spoken the truth,"

he replied. "I have the highest esteem for Miss Halcombe, and I have therefore every reason to respect a gentleman whose mediation she trusts in a matter of this kind. I will even go farther, if you like, and admit, for courtesy's sake and for argument's sake, that the identity of Lady Glyde, as a living person, is a proved fact to Miss Halcombe and yourself. But you come to me for a legal opinion. As a lawyer, and as a lawyer only, it is my duty to tell you, Mr. Hartright, that you have not the shadow of a case."

"You put it strongly, Mr. Kyrle."

"I will try to put it plainly as well. The evidence of Lady Glyde's death is, on the face of it, clear and satisfactory. There is her aunt's testimony to prove that she came to Count Fosco's house, that she fell ill, and that she died. There is the testimony of the medical certificate to prove the death, and to show that it took place under natural circumstances. There is the fact of the funeral at Limmeridge, and there is the assertion of the inscription on the tomb. That is the case you want to overthrow. What evidence have you to support the declaration on your side that the person who died and was buried was not Lady Glyde? Let us run through the main points of your statement and see what they are worth. Miss Halcombe goes to a certain private Asylum, and there sees a certain female patient. It is known that a woman named Anne Catherick, and bearing an extraordinary personal resemblance to Lady Glyde, escaped from the Asylum; it is known that the person received there last July, was received as Anne Catherick brought back; it is known that the gentleman who brought her back warned Mr. Fairlie that it was part of her insanity to be bent on personating his dead niece; and it is known that she did repeatedly declare herself, in the Asylum (where no one believed her), to be Lady Glyde. These are all facts. What have you to set against them? Miss Halcombe's recognition of the woman, which recognition after-events invalidate or contradict. Does Miss Halcombe assert her supposed sister's identity to the owner of the Asylum, and take legal means for rescuing her? No: she secretly bribes a nurse to let her escape. When the patient has been released in this doubtful manner, and is taken to Mr. Fairlie, does he recognise her? is he staggered for one instant in his belief of his niece's death? No. Do the servants recognise her? No. Is she kept in the neighbourhood to assert her own identity, and to stand the test of further proceedings? No: she is privately taken to London. In the mean time, you have recognised her also—but you are not a relative; you are not even an old friend of the family. The servants contradict you; and Mr. Fairlie contradicts Miss Halcombe; and the supposed Lady Glyde contradicts herself. She declares she passed the night in London at a certain house. Your own evidence shows that she has never been near that house; and your own admission is, that her condition of mind prevents you from producing her anywhere to submit to investiga-

tion, and to speak for herself. I pass over minor points of evidence, on both sides, to save time; and I ask you, if this case were to go now into a court of law—to go before a jury, bound to take facts as they reasonably appear—where are your proofs?"

I was obliged to wait and collect myself before I could answer him. It was the first time the story of Laura and the story of Marian had been presented to me from a stranger's point of view—the first time the terrible obstacles that lay across our path had been made to show themselves in their true character.

"There can be no doubt," I said, "that the facts, as you have stated them, appear to tell against us; but—"

"But you think those facts can be explained away," interposed Mr. Kyrle. "Let me tell you the result of my experience on that point. When an English jury has to choose between a plain fact, *on the surface*, and a long explanation *under the surface*, it always takes the fact, in preference to the explanation. For example, Lady Glyde (I call the lady you represent by that name for argument's sake) declares she has slept at a certain house, and it is proved that she has not slept at that house. You explain this circumstance by entering into the state of her mind, and deducing from it a metaphysical conclusion. I don't say the conclusion is wrong—I only say that the jury will take the fact of her contradicting herself, in preference to any reason for the contradiction that you can offer."

"But is it not possible," I urged, "by dint of patience and exertion, to discover additional evidence? Miss Halcombe and I have a few hundred pounds—"

He looked at me with a half-suppressed pity, and shook his head.

"Consider the subject, Mr. Hartright, from your own point of view," he said. "If you are right about Sir Percival Glyde and Count Fosco (which I don't admit, mind), every imaginable difficulty would be thrown in the way of your getting fresh evidence. Every obstacle of litigation would be raised; every point in the case would be systematically contested—and by the time we had spent our thousands, instead of our hundreds, the final result would, in all probability, be against us. Questions of identity, where instances of personal resemblance are concerned, are, in themselves, the hardest of all questions to settle—the hardest, even when they are free from the complications which beset the case we are now discussing. I really see no prospect of throwing any light whatever on this extraordinary affair. Even if the person buried in Limmeridge churchyard be not Lady Glyde, she was, in life, on your own showing, so like her, that we should gain nothing, if we applied for the necessary authority to have the body exhumed. In short, there is no case, Mr. Hartright—there is really no case."

I was determined to believe that there *was* a case; and, in that determination, shifted my ground, and appealed to him *once more*.

"Are there not other proofs that we might produce, besides the proof of identity?" I asked.

"Not as you are situated," he replied. "The simplest and surest of all proofs, the proof by comparison of dates, is, as I understand, altogether out of your reach. If you could show a discrepancy between the date of the doctor's certificate and the date of Lady Glyde's journey to London, the matter would wear a totally different aspect; and I should be the first to say, Let us go on."

"That date may yet be recovered, Mr. Kyrle."

"On the day when it is recovered, Mr. Hart-right, you will have a case. If you have any prospect, at this moment, of getting at it—tell me, and we shall see if I can advise you."

I considered. The housekeeper could not help us; Laura could not help us; Marian could not help us. In all probability, the only persons in existence who knew the date were Sir Percival and the Count.

"I can think of no means of ascertaining the date at present," I said, "because I can think of no persons who are sure to know it, but Count Fosco and Sir Percival Glyde."

Mr. Kyrle's calmly-attentive face relaxed, for the first time, into a smile.

"With your opinion of the conduct of those two gentlemen," he said, "you don't expect help in that quarter, I presume? If they have combined to gain large sums of money by a conspiracy, they are not likely to confess it, at any rate."

"They may be forced to confess it, Mr. Kyrle."

"By whom?"

"By me."

We both rose. He looked me attentively in the face with more appearance of interest than he had shown yet. I could see that I had perplexed him a little.

"You are very determined," he said. "You have, no doubt, a personal motive for proceeding, into which it is not my business to inquire. If a case can be produced in the future, I can only say, my best assistance is at your service. At the same time, I must warn you, as the money question always enters into the law question, that I see little hope, even if you ultimately established the fact of Lady Glyde's being alive, of recovering her fortune. The foreigner would probably leave the country, before proceedings were commenced; and Sir Percival's embarrassments are numerous enough and pressing enough to transfer almost any sum of money he may possess from himself to his creditors. You are, of course, aware——"

I stopped him at that point.

"Let me beg that we may not discuss Lady Glyde's affairs," I said. "I have never known anything about them, in former times; and I know nothing of them now—except that her fortune is lost. You are right in assuming that I have personal motives for stirring in this matter. I wish those motives to be always as

disinterested as they are at the present moment——"

He tried to interpose and explain. I was a little heated, I suppose, by feeling that he had doubted me; and I went on bluntly, without waiting to hear him.

"There shall be no money-motive," I said, "no idea of personal advantage, in the service I mean to render to Lady Glyde. She has been cast out as a stranger from the house in which she was born—a lie which records her death has been written on her mother's tomb—and there are two men, alive and unpunished, who are responsible for it. That house shall open again to receive her, in the presence of every soul who followed the false funeral to the grave; that lie shall be publicly erased from the tombstone, by the authority of the head of the family; and those two men shall answer for their crime to me, though the justice that sits in tribunals is powerless to pursue them. I have given my life to that purpose; and, alone as I stand, if God spares me, I will accomplish it."

He drew back towards his table, and said nothing. His face showed plainly that he thought my delusion had got the better of my reason, and that he considered it totally useless to give me any more advice.

"We each keep our opinion, Mr. Kyrle," I said; "and we must wait till the events of the future decide between us. In the mean time, I am much obliged to you for the attention you have given to my statement. You have shown me that the legal remedy lies, in every sense of the word, beyond our means. We cannot produce the law-proof; and we are not rich enough to pay the law expenses. It is something gained to know that."

I bowed, and walked to the door. He called me back, and gave me the letter which I had seen him place on the table by itself at the beginning of our interview.

"This came by post, a few days ago," he said. "Perhaps you will not mind delivering it? Pray tell Miss Halcombe, at the same time, that I sincerely regret being, thus far, unable to help her—except by advice, which will not be more welcome, I am afraid, to her than to you."

I looked at the letter while he was speaking. It was addressed to "Miss Halcombe. Care of Messrs. Gilmore and Kyrle, Chancery-lane." The handwriting was quite unknown to me.

On leaving the room, I asked one last question.

"Do you happen to know," I said, "if Sir Percival Glyde is still in Paris?"

"He has returned to London," replied Mr. Kyrle. "At least, I heard so from his solicitor, whom I met yesterday."

After that answer I went out.

On leaving the office, the first precaution to be observed was to abstain from attracting attention by stopping to look about me. I walked towards one of the quietest of the large squares on the north of Holborn—then suddenly stopped, and turned round at a place where a long stretch of pavement was left behind me.

There were two men at the corner of the square who had stopped also, and who were standing talking together. After a moment's reflection, I turned back, so as to pass them. One moved, as I came near, and turned the corner, leading from the square, into the street. The other remained stationary. I looked at him, as I passed, and instantly recognised one of the men who had watched me before I left England.

If I had been free to follow my own instincts, I should probably have begun by speaking to the man, and have ended by knocking him down. But I was bound to consider consequences. If I once placed myself publicly in the wrong, I put the weapons at once into Sir Percival's hands. There was no choice but to oppose cunning by cunning. I turned into the street down which the second man had disappeared, and passed him, waiting in a doorway. He was a stranger to me; and I was glad to make sure of his personal appearance, in case of future annoyance. Having done this, I again walked northward, till I reached the New-road. There, I turned aside to the west (having the men behind me all the time), and waited at a point where I knew myself to be at some distance from a cab-stand, until a fast two-wheel cab, empty, should happen to pass me. One passed in a few minutes. I jumped in, and told the man to drive rapidly towards Hyde Park. There was no second fast cab for the spies behind me. I saw them dart across to the other side of the road, to follow me by running, until a cab, or a cabstand, came in their way. But I had the start of them; and when I stopped the driver, and got out, they were nowhere in sight. I crossed Hyde Park, and made sure, on the open ground, that I was free. When I at last turned my steps homeward, it was not till many hours later—not till after dark.

I found Marian waiting for me, alone in the little sitting-room. She had persuaded Laura to go to rest, after first promising to show me her drawing, the moment I came in. The poor little dim faint sketch—so trifling in itself, so touching in its associations—was propped up carefully on the table with two books, and was placed where the faint light of the one candle we allowed ourselves might fall on it to the best advantage. I sat down to look at the drawing, and to tell Marian, in whispers, what had happened. The partition which divided us from the next room was so thin that we could almost hear Laura's breathing, and we might have disturbed her if we had spoken aloud.

Marian preserved her composure while I described my interview with Mr. Kyrle. But her face became troubled when I spoke next of the men who had followed me from the lawyer's office, and when I told her of the discovery of Sir Percival's return.

"Bad news, Walter," she said; "the worst news you could bring. Have you nothing more to tell me?"

"I have something to give you," I replied,

handing her the note which Mr. Kyrle had confided to my care.

She looked at the address, and recognised the handwriting instantly.

"You know your correspondent?" I said.

"Too well," she answered. "My correspondent is Count Fosco."

With that reply she opened the note. Her face flushed deeply while she read it—her eyes brightened with anger, as she handed it to me to read in my turn.

The note contained these lines:

"Impelled by honourable admiration—honourable to myself, honourable to you—I write, magnificent Marian, in the interests of your tranquillity, to say two consoling words:

"Fear nothing!

"Exercise your fine natural sense, and remain in retirement. Dear and admirable woman! invite no dangerous publicity. Resignation is sublime—adopt it. The modest repose of home is eternally fresh—enjoy it. The Storms of life pass harmless over the valley of Seclusion—dwell, dear lady, in the valley.

"Do this; and I authorise you to fear nothing. No new calamity shall lacerate your sensibilities—sensibilities precious to me as my own. You shall not be molested; the fair companion of your retreat shall not be pursued. She has found a new asylum, in your heart. Priceless asylum!—I envy her, and leave her there.

"One last word of affectionate warning, of paternal caution—and I tear myself from the charm of addressing you; I close these fervent lines.

"Advance no farther than you have gone already; compromise no serious interests; threaten nobody. Do not, I implore you, force me into action—Me, the Man of Action—when it is the cherished object of my ambition to be passive, to restrict the vast reach of my energies and my combinations, for your sake. If you have rash friends, moderate their deplorable ardour. If Mr. Hartright returns to England, hold no communication with him. I walk on a path of my own; and Percival follows at my heels. On the day when Mr. Hartright crosses that path, he is a lost man."

The only signature to these lines was the initial letter F, surrounded by a circle of intricate flourishes. I threw the letter on the table, with all the contempt that I felt for it.

"He is trying to frighten you—a sure sign that he is frightened himself," I said.

She was too genuine a woman to treat the letter as I treated it. The insolent familiarity of the language was too much for her self-control. As she looked at me across the table, her hands clenched themselves in her lap, and the old quick fiery temper flamed out again, brightly, in her cheeks and her eyes.

"Walter!" she said, "if ever those two men are at your mercy, and if you are obliged to spare one of them—don't let it be the Count."

"I will keep his letter, Marian, to help my memory when the time comes."

She looked at me attentively as I put the letter away in my pocket-book.

"When the time comes?" she repeated. "Can you speak of the future as if you were certain of it?—certain after what you have heard in Mr. Kyrle's office, after what has happened to you to-day?"

"I don't count the time from to-day, Marian. All I have done to-day, is to ask another man to act for me. I count from to-morrow——"

"Why from to-morrow?"

"Because to-morrow I mean to act for myself."

"How?"

"I shall go to Blackwater by the first train; and return, I hope, at night."

"To Blackwater!"

"Yes. I have had time to think, since I left Mr. Kyrle. His opinion, on one point, confirms my own. We must persist, to the last, in hunting down the date of Laura's journey. The one weak point in the conspiracy, and probably the one chance of proving that she is a living woman, centre in the discovery of that date."

"You mean," said Marian, "the discovery that Laura did not leave Blackwater Park till after the date of her death on the doctor's certificate?"

"Certainly."

"What makes you think it might have been after? Laura can tell us nothing of the time she was in London."

"But the owner of the Asylum told you that she was received there on the thirtieth of July. I doubt Count Fosco's ability to keep her in London, and to keep her insensible to all that was passing around her, more than one night. In that case, she must have started on the twenty-ninth, and must have come to London one day after the date of her own death on the doctor's certificate. If we can prove that date, we prove our case against Sir Percival and the Count."

"Yes, yes—I see! But how is the proof to be obtained?"

"Mrs. Michelson's narrative has suggested to me two ways of trying to obtain it. One of them is, to question the doctor, Mr. Dawson—who must know when he resumed his attendance at Blackwater Park, after Laura left the house. The other is, to make inquiries at the inn to which Sir Percival drove away by himself, at night. We know that his departure followed Laura's, after the lapse of a few hours; and we may get at the date in that way. The attempt is at least worth making—and, to-morrow, I am determined it shall be made."

"And suppose it fails—I look at the worst, now, Walter; but I will look at the best, if disappointments come to try us—suppose no one can help you at Blackwater?"

"There are two men who can help me, and shall help me, in London—Sir Percival and the Count. Innocent people may well forget the date—but *they* are guilty, and *they* know it. If

I fail everywhere else, I mean to force a confession out of one or both of them, on my own terms."

All the woman flushed up in Marian's face, as I spoke.

"Begin with the Count!" she whispered, eagerly. "For my sake, begin with the Count."

"We must begin, for Laura's sake, where there is the best chance of success," I replied.

The colour faded from her face again, and she shook her head sadly.

"Yes," she said, "you are right—it was mean and miserable of me to say that. I try to be patient, Walter, and succeed better now than I did in happier times. But I have a little of my old temper still left—and it *will* get the better of me when I think of the Count!"

"His turn will come," I said. "But, remember, there is no weak place in his life that we know of, yet." I waited a little to let her recover her self-possession; and then spoke the decisive words:

"Marian! There is a weak place we both know of in Sir Percival's life——"

"You mean the Secret!"

"Yes: the Secret. It is our only sure hold on him. I can force him from his position of security, I can drag him and his villainy into the face of day, by no other means. Whatever the Count may have done, Sir Percival has consented to the conspiracy against Laura from another motive besides the motive of gain. You heard him tell the Count that he believed his wife knew enough to ruin him? You heard him say that he was a lost man if the secret of Anne Catherick was known?"

"Yes! yes! I did."

"Well, Marian, when our other resources have failed us, I mean to know it. My old superstition clings to me, even yet. I say again, the woman in white is a living influence in our three lives. The End is appointed; the End is drawing us on—and Anne Catherick, dead in her grave, points the way to it still!"

EARTHQUAKES.

A FEW weeks ago we had the satisfaction of startling some of our steadiest readers from their repose by informing them of the prospect of a great deluge appointed to take place, according to the calculations of M. Adhémar, in the year of our Lord eight thousand one hundred and sixty.* We have, since, taken pains to learn whether or not we are in a shaky condition generally, and more especially what our prospects are in regard to earthquakes; the result is so serious, that we earnestly request the reader's attention to what we have to communicate.

To those who have not been refreshed by recent reading on the subject, it may seem that earthquakes in London are not things much more likely to be experienced than snow at Midsummer, or green peas at Christmas. But we have undertaken researches, and we find, in the British Museum Library, "A short and pithie Discourse concerning the En-

* See page 25 of the present volume.

gendering, Tokens, and Effects of all Earthquakes in general, particularly applied and conferred with that most strange and terrible *Worke of the Lord within the Citie of London*," &c. &c., 4to, London, 1580; and again, "A true and impartial Account of the strange and wonderful Earthquake which happened in most parts of the City of London, 8th September, 1692," on which occasion also a sermon was preached by a certain Rev. Samuel Doclittle, no doubt greatly improving the occasion. We have also, about fifty years later (or about a century ago), and at intervals ever since, various accounts of the same nature in different parts of the country, so that it is by no means contrary to experience, although not remembered by many living people, that our very capital should be invaded by this terrible foe.

The earthquakes that have been alluded to really deserve notice. The first lasted in London for one minute, occurring at six o'clock in the morning of the 6th of April of the year mentioned; and two less severe shocks were felt in Kent at nine and eleven A.M. of the same day. On the 1st of May following, another very considerable shock was experienced. On the occasion of the first shock, the great bells at Westminster and other places were made to sound, portions of several buildings and very many chimneys were thrown down, in London; and at Sandwich and Dover the sea was so much agitated, that vessels in the harbour were dashed against one another. The disturbance was felt, not only throughout England, but in France, Belgium, and Holland, and even as far as the Pyrenees. The shock felt in 1692 was also very violent, lasting two minutes, and was followed, about three days afterwards, by several more. All these occurred only a short time after a series of extremely violent shocks in the West Indies, during one of which, at Port Royal in Jamaica, three-fourths of the houses were thrown down, and three thousand persons perished.

Other violent shocks are recorded as having been felt in London and its neighbourhood in the middle of the last century, by which not only many parts of England, but the countries on the other side of the Channel, were disturbed. For several years, from the middle of 1748 until the end of 1755, when the great earthquake of Lisbon took place, there seem to have been occasional alarms in various parts of England, but the principal shocks recorded as occurring in the neighbourhood of London were on the night of the 18th and morning of the 19th of February, 1750. On this occasion there were several slight shocks during the night, and at about twenty minutes to six in the morning three or four were felt in succession in the space of ten or twelve seconds. They were preceded by a loud noise, compared by some to thunder, by others to the roaring of the wind, by others again to that of a carriage in motion. They moved in a direction apparently from north-east to south-west. The noise was heard at one or two places where no shock was felt. A black cloud, with continual and confused flashes of

lightning, had been visible before the earthquake: the flashes ceasing a minute or two before its commencement. Some chimneys were thrown down, and houses injured. A girl was thrown from her bed and her arm was broken. In St. James's Park and elsewhere the earth seemed to swell up and to be ready to open, three times. Dogs howled dismally, fishes threw themselves out of the water, and a horse that was brought to a watering-place refused to drink. During the succeeding two months, similar facts are recorded as having occurred several times in various parts of the British Islands.

Now, with these facts staring us in the face as we examine into the records handed down by the Royal Society, we are tempted to inquire whether, on another occasion, the results might not more resemble the awful catastrophe by which Lisbon was utterly ruined, and about a fourth part of the northern hemisphere shaken. If this happened at Lisbon, why should it not happen in England? If it took place a century ago, why not again, now, or at some future period? There are certain statistics from which we can determine, if only approximatively, the degree of probability that we may again have in Europe some great disturbance of this kind. Can we judge where it is likely to take place, and can we in any way foretell when it may be looked for?

The prophet of evil who is our authority in this inquiry, the philosopher whose calculations we depend upon, and whose views we propose to put before our readers, is Mr. Mallet, a mathematician, natural philosopher, and civil engineer, who, some ten years ago, proposed to the British Association to collect earthquake facts, with a view to determine if any generalisations could be drawn from them. A French philosopher, M. Perrey, appears to have entertained the same idea at least ten years before, and he collected for the purpose of publication all the information he could find. We have thus had two independent observers working together in this direction, and as their results agree, the conclusions have a greater value than might otherwise attach to them.

The first thing that strikes us on looking at the lists and tables obtained is, that there are actual records at hand, with date and particulars, of two hundred and thirty-four earthquakes that have taken place in the British Islands within the last eight and a half centuries, and that of these two hundred and thirty-four no less than one hundred and ten (nearly one half) have been felt during the present century—during the lifetime, therefore, of an important part of the existing population. The apparent increase is in a great measure explained by the much more complete accounts obtained since the existence of periodical publications stating the news of the day; but as the whole number recorded in the century ending in 1800 is only sixty-three against one hundred and ten from 1800 to 1850, we feel a little uneasy, and already fancy that we are a good deal more shaky than we had believed possible.

But if we are alarmed by this list of British earthquakes, and turn to see how our neighbours fare, we shall have little comfort beyond that of finding that we are no worse off than they. In the Scandinavian peninsula and Iceland, the numbers are rather higher, but not much: 111 have been recorded in those countries as felt during the last century, and 113 in the first half of the present. In Spain and Portugal 93 in the eighteenth, against 85 in the nineteenth; in France, Belgium, and Holland together, the figures are 308 and 292, while in the Basin of the Rhine and Switzerland, no less than 557 earthquakes are recorded since the beginning of the ninth century, of which 52 took place in the sixteenth, 120 in the seventeenth, 141 in the eighteenth, and no less than 173 in the first half of the present century. The Italian peninsula and the Eastern Mediterranean we might expect to be troubled with disturbances of this kind, owing to the large amount of volcanic action constantly taking place there; but, excluding these countries, where, indeed, upwards of 800 earthquakes have taken place within the last fifty years, we find a total of 2156 earthquakes recorded as felt at various places in Western Europe since the beginning of the Christian era: of which 773 belong to the present century.

Now, as we cannot suppose that we have anything like a complete account of all that have taken place, we may fairly assume that in these districts where, with the exception of Iceland, there is nothing of the nature of volcanic disturbance, there really must be, at least, one earthquake every six weeks, and perhaps more!

It is not the case that in this calculation the half-dozen or dozen shocks connected together as parts of one real disturbance are counted separately; on the contrary, where it seemed admissible, a whole group of small movements, spread over several days, is recorded as one earthquake. Such small shocks have been frequently felt at Comrie in Scotland, and elsewhere, and are always recorded in sets.

It is quite true that many of these shocks are inconsiderable, and that a disturbance sufficient to affect human life and property to a serious extent is unknown in the history of our country. Precisely the same remark might, however, have been made by the inhabitants of Lisbon at nine o'clock on the morning of the 1st November, 1755, although before the clocks left uninjured had struck the hour of ten, a large part of the city had been destroyed, and many thousands of human beings had passed away to their account.

The earthquake that destroyed Lisbon, produced almost as much mechanical disturbance in many places along the coast of Portugal and Spain, as it did at Lisbon; and, indeed, produced almost as much mischief on the shores of Morocco as on those of Europe. It reached northwards so far as to include Iceland, and westwards to the West Indian Islands and Canada. Its range in the interior of Europe included Italy, Switzerland, Bohemia, and the Baltic; and southwards it extended far into Africa. The exact spot where the first disturbance took place

was some distance out in the Atlantic, and there is nothing known that could have pointed to that spot, rather than any other, as one where such an event would originate.

England, then, appears to belong to a large tract of country, some of it above, and some under water, the whole of which is subject constantly to earthquake disturbance, and any part of which seems occasionally liable to movements of this nature, so considerable as to rival the most important on record. We enjoy no immunity from the most sudden, the most irresistible, the most destructive, of nature's powers. Another such shock as the Lisbon earthquake may happen this or next year. It may not happen in this country, but it may originate beneath our own metropolis or under the ocean. It may originate near us or a thousand miles away from us, but we are not the less certainly living over a mine ready to be sprung. No one can tell when or where the fatal match will be applied.

Let us look again to our figures, to see if we can obtain further information. Taking all recorded earthquakes as the basis of calculation, we find a list of nearly seven thousand separate events ranging over three thousand four hundred and fifty years. Of the whole number, most of those recorded in early times were very serious, and are mentioned for that reason in history as extraordinary and exceptional events. Most of those mentioned within the last century, on the other hand, have been slight, but, *a fortiori*, the severe ones have also been spoken of, and we have generally had detailed accounts of them. Thus, although the materials for calculation are imperfect, yet the nature of the imperfections is known, and valuable comparative results may be obtained. Out of the whole number (6831), we have 787 distributed over eighteen centuries terminating in the year 1500; 2804 between the years 1500 and 1800; and the rest (2227) during the first half of the present century. From the most recent observations we obtain a general average of one earthquake in some part or other of the earth's surface every six days, and of these it is further calculated that one fortieth part (one earthquake every eight months) is of "serious importance," or, in other words, is one in which whole cities and towns, or large portions of them, have been reduced to rubbish, and many lives lost. In the vast tract subject to earthquakes, of which our islands form a part, the proportion of serious disturbances would probably be below the general average; but if, instead of one great earthquake in eight months there be only one every quarter of a century, there is yet sufficient cause for alarm.

It occurred to M. Perrey, to tabulate his earthquakes in various ways, in order to discover whether any relation existed between them and the moon's position—whether temperature had anything to do with their recurrence—and sundry other matters. He soon found that taking four years, during which his material was most ample and most accurate (1844 to

1847, both inclusive), the number of earthquakes near new and full moon exceeded the number at the quarters, in the proportion of six to five. Further observations seemed to confirm this curious deduction, but at present it can only be regarded as suggesting future inquiry. It certainly seems to be the result of all observations lately made, that there is some relation between the moon's place and the convulsive paroxysms of the earth.

Out of 5879 earthquakes that have occurred in the northern hemisphere, and of which the exact dates are recorded, as many as 3158 took place in the cold months between the 1st of October and the 31st of March: only 2721 being felt between the 1st of April and the 30th of September. The largest number—627—occurred in January, and the smallest—415—in July.

Turn these unexpected figures as we will, they seem always to point in the same direction, and to intimate that, in all countries liable to change of seasons, the warm season is less subject to earthquakes than the cold.

Thus, if we take all Europe together, we find 1153 recorded in the cold, and only 857 in the warm months. If we take the countries separately, the British Islands list shows 94 in the summer, and 123 in the winter. Spain and Portugal, 87 in summer, and 114 in winter. Italy gives the numbers 455 and 438; France, Belgium, and Holland together, 272 and 395 in the warm and cold months respectively.

There is another curious result obtained on comparing the number of earthquakes in different seasons. During the two months that enclose the four critical periods of the year, called by astronomers the equinoxes and the solstices, earthquakes seem more likely to happen than during the intermediate months. Thus, in December and January, in the winter solstice, the number is 177; in March and April, the vernal or spring equinox, 151; in June and July, the summer solstice, 129; and in September and October, the autumnal equinox, 164. There are only about 290 earthquakes left for the other four months. This average was obtained from the details of the earthquakes during the first forty-three years of the present century.

On tracing back the accounts of these remarkable phenomena, we shall find that though evidently convulsive and paroxysmal, and following no regular law yet determined, they still show certain general relations worth considering. Thus, small earthquakes often recur after short intervals, but between sets of them thus frequently repeated in any one district there are intervals of comparative repose. The smallest of such intervals is not more than a year or two. These small intervals correspond to periods when there are on the whole fewest earthquakes; and generally, but not always, such earthquakes have not been of the most destructive kind. On the other hand, the average interval is five to ten years, and the earthquakes that then occur are more serious and more numerous.

Two marked periods of extreme paroxysm, or greatest earthquake intensity, seem to occur in

each century: or at least this has been the case for some centuries past. One of these periods is greater than the other, and has occurred near the middle of the century. The other, very serious but not of equal importance, towards the close of the century. It is worthy of notice that two or three great and destructive earthquakes have often happened within a few years in very distant parts of the world at these periods.

It would seem that whatever be the cause of earthquake paroxysms, this cause requires a certain time to recover its energy after having exhausted itself by a great struggle. Smaller movements, from time to time, also convulsive, produce comparatively little effect beyond the alarm consequent on local disturbances.

Some of the great earthquakes mentioned in modern history, and the subject of special description, have occurred with remarkable regularity at about the intervals of time mentioned above, but they have affected parts of the world very distant from each other, and without any apparent mutual relations. If, however, we regard the tract including the north of Africa, the whole of Europe, Northern Asia, the North Atlantic Ocean, the North American shores of the Atlantic, and the West Indian Islands, as being that which most interests us, we shall find that during the latter part of the sixteenth century there were numerous and very severe disturbances, accompanied by remarkable appearances of aurora borealis in low latitudes. These earthquakes extended throughout Central Europe, being felt, indeed, from Northern Asia to the Atlantic, including our own islands. They were accompanied by disastrous inundations arising from the great rivers as well as the sea. The shocks felt in London at this time have been already alluded to.

In 1626, occurred one of the most fatal of the South Italian earthquakes, by which more than thirty towns and villages were destroyed, and seventeen thousand persons lost their lives. The disturbances continued until 1631, terminating by a great eruption of Vesuvius. In 1657, great earthquakes occurred in Scandinavia, and shortly afterwards in Calabria, the Pyrenees, and Central Italy, and these were felt also in England. Towards the end of the same century there are many remarkable disturbances recorded, including that of Jamaica. In 1755 was the great earthquake of Lisbon, preceded by numerous smaller convulsions all over Western Europe, and followed by others of great significance. Later in the century (in 1770), were fearful earthquakes in the West Indies, and afterwards again in Calabria. The century closed with a severe convulsion over the whole of the north-west of France, and many shocks in Scandinavia and Russia. During the present century, there have been many not unimportant disturbances of this kind over the whole of Europe and Northern Asia—more, in fact, than would easily be credited, if we had not the record before us. Perhaps the frequency of shocks has prevented the accumulation of force which terminates in one grand convulsion.

Although, however, it really appears to have

been the fashion of our ancestors to indulge in the excitement of severe earthquakes towards the latter part of each century for some centuries past, we may make use of our figures to somewhat more comforting purpose: inasmuch as it also seems that in every third or fourth century there is a general lull, and that the present ought to be one of these quiet periods. We may, therefore, escape altogether, having fallen upon less excited times than have been experienced since the middle of the sixteenth century.

However this may be, our position is serious; we stand, as it seems, between fire and water—liable to be blown up at a moment's notice, if not certain to be drowned at the end of the six thousand years.

But there is another and a very curious result of these statistics that is worth looking at. If it be the case that earthquakes are to a certain extent periodical; if, as we have seen, they occur most frequently at certain times of the year, at certain periods of the moon's age, in certain magnetic conditions of the earth, and in certain relations to the sun; we must see whether this extends further, and whether we may not, perhaps, discover some distinct influences exerted by various heavenly bodies on what goes on in the interior of our earth.

One or two matters of this kind are now within the range of direct observation. The face of the sun, for example, is occasionally observed with spots, and these spots have been noticed to increase in number and obscurity until they attain a maximum, and then to decrease to a minimum. Between ten and eleven years is the time taken for the complete cycle of changes, and the changes are now admitted to have direct influence on the magnetism of the earth. Thus, the magnetism of the earth—one of the most important and universal of the forces, producing marked results on all matter, animal, vegetable, and mineral—is governed by some condition of the sun's atmosphere, observed only by the astronomer who watches carefully with a good telescope, and of which nobody suspected the existence a few years ago.

So, also, the moon, in some way as yet little understood, has decided influence on the magnetism of the earth. It may, also, directly affect the mass of the interior, if in a fluid state: producing a tide, on a smaller scale, perhaps, but resembling that occurring in the open ocean of water.

Some have even attempted to go beyond the sun and moon, connecting the cycle of magnetic variation with the period of the planet Jupiter, finding coincidences between that planet's periodic return and those of the solar spots, and thus assuming a combined, and therefore increased, magnetic influence on our own planet.

It has occurred to us, while investigating this subject, that Sir Isaac Newton was, perhaps, not far wrong when he described himself as a mere collector and arranger of superficial facts thrown by chance in his way. "I do not know what I may appear to the world," he is reported to have said, shortly before his death, "but to my-

self I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

There is much sound philosophy hidden under this quaint conceit. Newton collected the facts in his own department of science, put them together, thought about them, and, by bringing to bear upon them the full force of his rare and powerful intellect, arrived at conclusions, many of which have never since been reached by his method, though confirmed by other methods less intellectual and more mechanical. But even Newton's marvellous generalisations do but serve as the basis of still higher generalisations, arising from the rapid increase since his time in the number of facts accurately observed. Newton's so-called laws, once looked on as universal, are now becoming recognised as only subordinate to some other laws yet to be made out. All the recent facts about earth-magnetism are new; all the workings out of electricity in every department, are new; all we hear about certain rays of the sun not communicating light or heat, but having chemical effects, illustrated in what we call photography, is new; and what little is known about the interior of the earth has been learnt since Newton lived. Others, since he showed the way, have been picking up pebbles and shells, and many, not content with picking up and admiring, have also endeavoured to arrange them as he did. It is true that no second Newton has yet arisen, with an instinct beyond ordinary intellect, grasping the shadowy law before it is near enough to be recognised by ordinary vision; but the tendency of discovery is to prepare for such a result, and perhaps before long we ourselves may see many branches of science, now apparently without mutual relations, brought together to explain each other.

Thus, these investigations about earthquakes are not mere matters of curiosity; they also represent pebbles on the shore of the ocean of truth; they are not without beauty, and certainly not without interest. Let us hope that it will not be long before they are placed in their proper niche in the cabinet of science.

CONVICT CAPITALISTS.

MR. SMILES'S Self-Help is a book that has been extensively sold and adopted as an educational text-book by certain American colleges. Its success has been well deserved. The world can never hear too much in praise of application and perseverance, energy and courage, industry and ingenuity, self-culture and the dignity of work. As the taste of a nation is purified by looking upon the best models of art, so the character of a nation must be strengthened by looking upon the best models of living men.

The task which Mr. Smiles has performed for virtue, ought to be performed for vice. The rising generation gains nothing by being admitted to view human nature only on its brightest side. Without going the length of saying that

whatever is, is right, I assert that whatever has been, is worthy of a record.

Criminals, of nearly all kinds, are great practical demonstrators. The burglar shows us, by experiment, the weakest point in our dwelling; the fraudulent bankrupt has a use in pointing out the traps and pitfalls of trade; the forging bank-clerk directs the attention of men to the blindness of business professors, and the inutility of so-called business checks. It is not enough, for the purposes of perfect education, that the career of such great teachers should only be stamped upon the ephemeral pages of the daily and weekly press; the modern Plutarch should seize them, as they rise to the surface, and hand them down for imperishable infamy and fame. The compilations of this character that have been already attempted, are too wanting in simplicity, too overloaded with technical details, to stand as the model histories of "men who have helped themselves." We want something more concise, more biographical, and less apologetic—a Newgate Calendar, in fact, for the use of schools. If, in addition to teaching wisdom and caution to ignorant holders of property, it should teach crime to a few budding criminals, it would work out a beneficial mission, notwithstanding.

It seems to be a law of social nature that crimes shall reach a certain point of enormity, or excellence, before they are put down by the aroused energies of their victims, or retire upon the laurels of satisfied ambition. There was a time when burglary, both with and without violence, was the nightly phantom that haunted the pillows of all who had anything to lose. It reached its climax in certain murders committed some twenty years ago, since which period it has gradually declined, until it may now be considered almost a lost art.

The leading delinquency of the present day, is the robbery of joint-stock companies by confidential servants. From Walter Watts to William George Pullinger, it shows every sign of a vigorous and progressive youth. It may have been cast a little in the shade by the frauds of certain merchants, private bankers, and bank directors; by such leviathan "self-helpers" as Strahan and Paul, as Davidson and Gordon, as J. Windle Cole, John Sadleir, Hugh Cameron, and Humphrey Brown of the Royal British Bank; as Colonel Waugh, and certain directors of the Liverpool Borough Bank, the Western Bank of Scotland, and the Northumberland and Durham District Bank (amongst whom there is upwards of two millions of sterling money to be accounted for); it may have been cast a little in the shade by such colossal monuments of fraud, but, for all that, it is well able to hold its own. The relations of master and servant impose many difficulties in the way of ambitious forgers. Such men as Walter Watts, as William James Robson, as Leopold Redpath, and William George Pullinger, are the purest examples of "men who have helped themselves." They started from very humble positions—were born with no directorial silver spoons in their mouths—were

quick to discover the weakest point of the trading system in which they were placed—and, with one exception, almost ended by becoming convict millionnaires.

Walter Watts, who stands first in the history of this class of modern fraud, was a humble check-clerk in the office of the Globe Insurance Company, at a salary of two hundred pounds a year. He was the son of a former honourable but subordinate clerk in the same establishment, and he entered upon his duties some time about 1844. When his frauds were discovered in 1850, he had succeeded in abstracting about seventy thousand pounds.

He seems only to have discovered who were in reality the city "men of straw." They were not the "stays" of Capel-court, the professional bill acceptors, or the presentable directors who gained a precarious livelihood by lending their titled names to boards of management and prospectuses; but those singularly deceptive beings, those wooden guardians of property—those Gogs and Magogs of trading guilds and associations—the appointed auditors. He seems early to have analysed one of these highly curious productions of the mercantile world, and to have arrived at an exact estimate of its value. He found it to be composed of a little fussiness, a great deal of carelessness and trusting simplicity, a small portion of hurried and divided attention—the real business and chief interest lying in another direction—the usual amount of cloth and linen that goes to the furnishing of a responsible-looking City merchant, and a pair of pinch-nose spectacles of faultless magnifying power. He observed that this half-human, half-mechanical being had a settled aversion to move off its chair, and seldom asked to be allowed to examine any books or documents that were not voluntarily placed before it. He observed that it had an almost superstitious reverence for figures, if they appeared to balance each other, and showed no marks of erasure; and that so long as these emblems or signs of things were provided in liberal quantities, it never cared to inquire whether the things themselves had any substantial existence. He found that the more entangled these figures, emblems, or signs, were made, the quicker did the auditor glide through his duty; and he inferred from this that human nature was asserting its influence, and that auditors, like other beings, unwilling to confess their ignorance, were only too happy to pass rapidly over complications that they could not understand. He observed that in those rare cases where a personal survey of property was added to an empty audit of figures, the property was never "over the way," or "round the corner," but situated in a distant part of the country, where it gave an excuse for a pleasant summer journey, and several days' festivity at leading hotels: of course at the expense of the audited company.

This being the result of Walter Watts's analysis of auditors, it can hardly be wondered at, that he gained courage to "help himself." He took thousands after thousands, through the

medium of false entries and fictitious claims; he became the proprietor of two theatres, and lived an intensely gay life during the hours that remained to him before ten o'clock in the morning, and after four o'clock in the afternoon; his office banking pass-book and his fire and life loss-book presented a mass of erasures and alterations, but still he met with no check or hindrance from the auditing men of straw. Nor was it through their periodical vigilance that his frauds were, at last, discovered, and that he was driven, through a verdict of ten years' transportation, to hang himself in his cell.

The fate of Walter Watts, in 1850, was powerless, so it seems, to deter others from following in his footsteps, and benefiting by the discoveries which his keenness and industry had made. The loss of seventy thousand pounds sterling by the Globe Insurance Company was also powerless, so it seems, to improve the character of auditors, and elevate them into something less practically worthless than men of straw.

The next fraudulent servant who "helped himself" to any great extent, was William James Robson, the forger of Crystal Palace shares. His operations began in 1853—within three years of the death of Walter Watts—and ended in 1856. His private life was very similar to that of the master he copied, although he only succeeded in appropriating about thirty thousand pounds. This was done by taking advantage of his position in the transfer office of the Crystal Palace Company, to create shares and sell them in the market: relying upon the apathy of the purchasers—a class from whom auditors are drawn. His calculations—or rather Walter Watts's calculations—were perfectly sound, and for two years and more these strips of paper were frequently bought and sold, without any purchaser having the prudence to walk from the Stock Exchange to the transfer office on the City side of London-bridge, where he might easily have discovered the fraud. The amount that Robson secured was small compared with Watts's abstractions, but it was large when allowance is made for the inferior materials with which he had to work. If his lot had fallen upon happier ground—upon the banking balances of rich and thriving corporations—he might have eclipsed his predecessor in the loftiness and daring of his flight. As it was, he might have said, in imitation of Jean Paul Richter, "I have made the most of the stuff that was given me: no man can do more." He was transported for twenty years.

Some time before William James Robson rose and fell, and very shortly after the death of Walter Watts, a greater man than either in this peculiar aristocracy of fraud, must have been already laying his plans. Leopold Redpath, a clerk in the share office of the Great Northern Railway, had also learnt the empty character of auditors, and the hollowness of so-called business checks. In 1851 or 1852 he must have begun to issue forged shares. From that period until 1856, his career was one of clerkly ex-

actitude and fraudulent success; his life was one of mingled luxury and philanthropy; and when he was arrested, to be afterwards transported for life, he had obtained from the sale of his forged shares, about two hundred and forty thousand pounds. His trial took place on the 15th of January, 1857, hardly five months after the following auditorial certificate of the company's business regularity, had been issued to the confiding shareholders:

"Accountant's Department, Aug. 7, 1856.

"To the Chairman and Directors of the Great Northern Railway Company.

"Gentlemen,—The accounts and books in every department continue to be so satisfactorily kept, that we have simply to express our entire approval of them, and to present them to you for the information of the shareholders, with our usual certificate of correctness.

"We have the honour, &c.,
(Signed)

"JOHN CHAPMAN, } Auditors."
"J. CATTLEY, }

At this period, Leopold Redpath must have received the bulk of his enormous prize.

The notoriety of this case, the extent of fraud it disclosed, and the complete verification it presented of Walter Watts's secret analysis of auditors, were generally considered sufficient to check all further development of this class of crime. The world was disposed to look upon Leopold Redpath as one who had reached the top of the criminal tree; as the most eminent among all modern men of this kind who had "helped themselves." It was widely understood that all joint-stock enterprises had undergone a searching examination and cleaning out; that insurance offices, railways, and especially banks, were secured, for ever, from any fraudulent worms in the bud, and were now to be happy in having auditors who were something more than men of straw. Failures might come (as come they did), and the country might pass through the financial agony of a commercial crisis (as it did at the close of 1857), but it was felt that forging servants of joint-stock companies had had their day, and that, after all, the wisdom taught us by their dishonesty was not so dearly bought.

How little this sense of security was based upon actual knowledge, has been shown, within a few weeks, by William George Pullinger, the last and greatest follower of Walter Watts. This late chief cashier of the Union Bank of London pleaded guilty to a charge of having stolen two hundred and sixty-three thousand and seventy pounds eight shillings and tenpence, by means of a false pass-book, and tampering with a Bank of England account. He entered the bank, as an ordinary clerk, in 1839, and he became chief cashier about 1855. Five years after Walter Watts committed suicide, one year before Robson was discovered and transported, two years before a similar punishment was awarded to Redpath, this fraudulent bank servant must have begun to abstract the bank funds. On the very day when the trial of the

latter criminal was taking place, and possibly on the day after, when his own auditors may have been rubbing their hands and congratulating themselves upon the anti-fraudulent armour of the Union Bank, this William George Pullinger may have been speculating on the turf, or the Stock Exchange, and keeping money back from his employers' store at the Bank of England, in order to gamble like a capitalist, or a sporting lord. As evening came, and he locked his desk, and put on his hat, and closed the door of the banking-house upon his humbler fellow-clerks, he must have laughed when he considered how they were settling down for hours under the shaded lamps, to trace an obstinate error of a few pounds or a few shillings in the "general balance," while he was tripping off with a quarter of a million of money that was supposed to be safely lodged in the national bullion temple over the way. He had little fear that any discovery would be made before the allotted termination of five years; for Walter Watts's calculations—proved as they had been by Robson and Redpath—were to be trusted like the axioms of an exact science. He knew that certain inferior stealers of gold had substituted shot in its place; and that other ruder criminals had piled up stones and brickbats to conceal the loss of property. He had studied in a higher school, and he knew the value of figures. He relied upon a judicious combination of Arabic numerals, and his confidence was not misplaced. The appointed auditors—the Gog and Magog of the bank—were rather an assistance to him than otherwise. They looked so like a pair of terrible guardians of property, that people most contentedly accepted the show for the reality. So William George Pullinger stood for years within their shadow, and "helped himself" freely to everything around him; and when he was discovered—as usual, not by auditorial sagacity—he had distanced Walter Watts by nearly two hundred thousand pounds, and the great Redpath by nearly thirty thousand.

Many believe (so most of us hear said) that the Pullinger frauds will end this forging series. We shall see. Commercial houses will be hurriedly put in order for a few weeks, and auditors will join hands and swear solemnly that such things shall never occur again. We shall see.

A joint-stock bank, as most persons are aware, is a trading corporation started for money-lending and money-borrowing purposes, with a small paid-up, and a large promised capital. This paid-up capital maybe a million of money, and a million we will take it to be, for the sake of example. In the course of a few years, if money be plentiful, and the bank be reputed to be prosperous, "customers' balances" remain, and "deposits" flow in, until from six to ten millions of *borrowed capital* is added to the *paid-up capital*. With the whole of this sum the bank is at perfect liberty to trade, reserving a certain portion by way of "balance"—in some cases a fifth, in others an eighth—according to the rules of business experience and the laws of banking. In the mean time, the shares, which represent

the original paid-up capital of one million sterling, are always to be bought in the open market at a certain varying premium. If the future Pullinger can help himself to a certain proportion of the available resources of the bank (about a fifth will generally suffice)—and there is nothing in the past or present system of auditing to prevent him—it will be easily seen that he can buy up all the shares of his employers, until he stands the sole proprietor of the establishment, secure from any civil or criminal prosecution. The bank will be his, the clerks will be his, the books and documents will be his; and, as many people prefer dealing with a private banker, he may experience but a very slight "run" upon his six or ten millions of "deposits."

VENICE UNVISITED.

I.

THE lovely City married to the Ocean
Disturbs me with her image from afar;
A troublous motion
Of music drawn from other years
Dulls a long vision down to tears,
Made bright by distance and by height, which are
The birthright of a star.

II.

I stand aloof like some sweet lover pining
By night without the lighted room where she
He loves is shining;
Who strains across a rushing wind
To watch her shadow on the blind,
And feel, while waiting at the trysting-tree,
The face he cannot see.

III.

I see her now, this Chatterton of Cities!
The sea crawls up to kiss her from the South,
Crooning old ditties;
And standing far away I trace
The lie of beauty on her face,
And still the slothful sin and idle drowth
Seem sweet upon her mouth.

IV.

The seeds of Love are running wild around her,
Her pride has fallen since the wealthy waves
Arose and crowned her;
The spirit of the Past still roams
Her shrines and palaces and domes,
A spectral Future broods above, and braves
The glory of her graves.

V.

She took her dowry from immortal nations—
The many winds brought wedding-gifts and loud
Congratulations;
The words of peace were on her lips,
Her seas were dark with coming ships,
And, as she gained the bridegroom crown'd and proud,
The nations cried aloud.

VI.

The slothful sin fell on her, and she trembled
O'er her own image in the violet deep,
With pride dissembled;
She left her crowded streets and towers,
And deck'd her brow with idle flowers,
She dreamed away her fame, where waters keep
A music soft as sleep

VII.

The function faded wholly with the duty,
But left the everlasting bane or grace
Which gave her beauty.
She saw with unaffrighted heart
The ships forsake her empty mart;
But God had found her in her dwelling-place
And cursed her with her face.

VIII.

But still the old immortal beauty lingers,
And still she weaves the flowers of other Springs
With fairy fingers;
And still she holds her unproved
Communion with a time removed,
Wafted from Heaven on the golden wings
Of high imaginings.

IX.

Is it enough that she is lovely? lying
Unsinew'd till the populous sea recedes
And leaves her dying?
Or might she give, through pain and strife,
The Beautiful a deeper life,
Rising erect on sin and slothful creeds
To treble it with deeds?

X.

Peace to this Venice, though fulfilling never
The law that made her lovely; she must twine
Such flowers for ever!
Before our English woods are rolled
In blowing mists of autumn gold,
I trust to kneel before her still divine,
And unforgotten, shrine.

CHINESE WAYS OF WARFARE.

SHARP work enough it was up at Canton, when the war first broke out, and there were only a few hundred English to hold their own against many thousand Chinamen, including the "Braves." These latter were represented as such terrible fellows that they were obliged to be kept chained up, for fear of their breaking loose and annihilating trembling humanity: only being let out on special occasions, when excessive bravery and daring were required to achieve great ends.

Chinese warfare, however, consists generally in devising plans which require not the presence of man to execute, rather than in making bold sorties to sweep away "outer barbarians" from the face of the earth. The Chinese are partial to fire-junks—their enemies, in a true spirit of ignorance, are disrespectful enough to look upon in the light of fireworks; they are, moreover, punctual in their pyrotechnic displays, generally sending them down the current at about a quarter to four in the morning, conveniently waking up the officer of the middle watch in readiness to be relieved by the officer of the morning watch, who has something to enliven the even tenor of his way in watching them burn down and finally explode, after drifting into the middle of, and setting fire to, a number of native craft moored comfortably for the night. It is a fine sight, however, to see them glide majestically past with the tide: the flames showing grandly through the rails of their high and picturesque sterns.

But the Celestials occasionally vary the monotony of their fire-rafts, with an ingenious little affair in a boat (a pretty idea), a large quantity of manure of an extremely volatile nature, under which they store a good deal of gunpowder; then, when they have added a badly-fed convict to scull down under the bows of an obtrusive ship, they fire the match and swim for it. One of these unasked-for bouquets exploded alongside a vessel commanded by an Honourable English captain, covering her decks and every one on them with specimens of an extremely aromatic nature, even to filling the chest of an officer which stood under a hatchway, and which chanced to be open at the time. They are fond, too, of enlivening the tedium of warfare with various facetious acts, as when the Dutch Folly Fort had been taken and a blue-jacket garrison put in, the hail of "All's well," made by the sentries when the bell was struck, used to be answered by the light-hearted little fellows in pigtails on the walls of Canton with a true and correct imitation. Nor are they averse to sending bad rockets over the heads of barbarians; but whether with the intention of striking terror and death to their hearts, is unknown, the effect being simply amusement.

But we, on our part, rather astonished them when the "man-of-war devil ships" (as they call our steamers) began to play up, one fine November morning, to the tune of red-hot shot and shell: causing Celestial buildings to blaze in a manner that would have induced the uninitiated to believe them terrestrial, and converting high and mighty houses into castles in the air.

The Chinese nature is also a confiding one in warfare. This was seen when the French Folly Fort fell, when those unfortunate persons who were not engaged but had got into the line of fire on shore and had been hit, went on board our ships to beg the surgeons to dress their wounds.

For fear of coming into dangerous proximity with the fire-rafts before mentioned, several captured war-junks had been moored across the stream ahead of the English ships, and a guard of half a dozen marines with a corporal, had been put into one of them to keep a look out ahead. Now, it so happened that some pull-away boats (small sharp-built junks fitted with an innumerable number of oars, and two long guns) came down the reach, one evening, and, under cover of the darkness, began firing right and left on the unsuspecting English ships: which in their turn quickly proceeded to send grape and case after them, and also manned boats. The vessel which had the guard in the junk, sent one of hers to fetch them away, when they found that they were not there, and, though the boat pulled round to all the ships, nothing could be heard of the missing "joeys;" it was thereupon concluded that they had been carried off by the Chinamen. The fact turned out to be, however, that, seeing the firing going on, they thought they might as well do a little in that way themselves, and began discharging their muskets as hard as they could; one of our English boats perceiving this, and knowing nothing of there being marines

aboard, made instantly for the junk, and boarded her, cutlass in hand. They were astonished to find themselves confronted by half a dozen sturdy marines, whom they quickly put into their boat and proceeded in chase of the offenders. The astonishment of shipmates was great, when the "sea soldiers" marched up over the gangway next day and fell in on the quarter deck, after having been given up for lost.

All this, besides the terrible amount of bloodshed which has since taken place, was caused by the Chinese authorities hauling down the English ensign (which, by the way, had no business to be hoisted) on board a lorcha which had been recognised by some merchants as one which had robbed a vessel of theirs out at sea, a short time before. The persons on board were identified individually as being concerned in the aforesaid robbery, and there is little doubt that the lorcha was as great a pirate as any other vessel of that class. The class bears a very questionable name, and, in the opinion of some, does not number an honest trader in its lists. A lorcha will take in a cargo at Hong-Kong, and leave that place with old mat sails and painted black; when fairly at sea she will be painted yellow or blue (not uncommon colours), bend new canvas sails, and look out for a rich prize—perhaps a Fuchow junk laden with hams, bacon, and rice—and after committing many depredations, will repaint black, rebend the old sails, and go into the harbour to which she was bound with her original cargo. There, she will report that she has been attacked by, but has beaten off, a yellow lorcha with new sails, and if there be an English man-of-war at hand, such man-of-war will probably go out in search of such lorcha. These lorchas, the majority of which are Portuguese, are peculiar craft; they have a half European hull, with a touch of Chinese: the bows low, and the stern rounded high up, in thorough opposition to our principles of ship-building. They have also Chinese masts and sails, though the latter are often made of canvas, the better to be managed by the Chinese seamen.

It was always thought, however, that the affair of the lorcha Arrow, which occasioned the present war, was merely the pretence for laying the foundation of one: the Chinese having long been extremely insolent in all their proceedings; moreover, the term of the treaty had run out, and a new and more advantageous one was required.

But to return to Canton. On the night before mentioned, one of the ships, lying off the Shamun Forts (which had been disarmed), found the shot coming in, not only from ahead, but also from abeam, which naturally made those on board conclude that they were being fired into by the forts, and next day a large working party were sent ashore, to do what they could towards knocking the forts down. It was thought unlikely that the Chinese would allow their forts (which were of European construction) to be demolished, without making an attempt to save them; and so it proved, for

as the men were resuming their work after dinner, they heard a loud beating of gongs, and looking over the inner parapet, saw a large number of "Braves," who had been despatched to shoot them all, but who, on hearing them laughing and talking at their work, had required to have their courage plucked up by sound of gong. Our men soon dispersed their opponents, who took to the houses, and began firing out of the windows; so the order of the day was altered, and a mine made, which soon brought the old fort rattling about their ears.

The ship's getting the shot into her broadside when all the firing was ahead, was soon explained. The Chinese do not understand how to cast shot; the consequence is, that they are not perfectly spherical, and, when they strike the water, will ricochet at an angle to the direction in which they are fired—often a right angle. They are not very particular in their gunnery: not objecting to fire a gun with a shot that is too large, jammed in the muzzle: which in most cases bursts the gun and kills half a dozen of them; or they will put in a shot so small, that, on looking up the gun, you might see the charge of powder behind it.

ALL IN THE DOWNS.

Downshire, in the map of England, stands in a quiet neighbourly unobtrusive way, next to Ramshire, with Hillshire and Hogshire north and south of it.

Like Ramshire, it is a great sheep-breeding county; its annual sheep fair is the largest held in Great Britain. I love every inch of Downshire: its dun-coloured and emerald downs, its lanes walled with honeysuckles in summer, and starred with primroses in spring. I like the way the white roads climb, with straightforward boldness, up the steep shoulders of the sloping prairie country. I like the floating blue of the distance, I like its lines of soldiery firs, I like its very weeds, even its molehills, the warts and wens, as it were, on its broad, honest, sunny face.

I write from Downshire now, for I am chasing Health, at a hand gallop, all over the tawny downs where the grizzled scorched grass is but a mere dry hide over the winter-chilled earth. The saddle is not cold yet upon which I have been scouring all this end of Downshire, from Crockerton Furze to Stanton Corner. Jingling over the little grey bridge opposite my country inn, jolts one of those country tilt-carts, with strained white awnings over them, which look like eggs, in the centre of which, having first scooped out the yolk and the white, sit the crimsoned-faced drivers, whistling a country tune, almost as pleasant as that of the black-bird's that sits on the apricot-tree at my window. That is the carrier (I know him well), for he passes here every morning at ten, and is on his way from Spireton to Deverton St. Mary's.

Oh, that cart and its singing blithe driver have had a pleasant trip of it since sunrise, passing

fields all of a transparent emerald flicker with the thin curling tender blades of spring wheat, among which strut, and plume themselves, and hover, and flutter, the rooks, engaged in entomological researches, and large and glossy as black kittens! They have stirred lazily as the cart approached, have thrown out their pendent legs behind them, have worked up and down their wings ragged at the edge, and have resumed their studies almost before the cart has well jogged past the milestone, orange and black with twenty years' lichens. Young orchards, where tiles are hung to the top boughs to bend them over to a basket shape; fields spotted with flint heaps; folds full of the voices of the sheep waiting to be fed, has the cart passed by. Many long processions of waggons, baled with hay, or dark with fagots, has it passed, many horses proud of the crimson and yellow shaving-brushes on their heads, and of the sharp tingling bells upon their harness that chime far along the glaring white road along which they trample smokingly, the boiling dust-clouds following them as if said roads were on fire.

But let the egg-shell jog on the pleasant road, dappled as it passes under the Deveril Park trees, and let me sketch a Downshire village with its russet thatch roofs, and here and there, at the post-office or the farrier's, a blue slate or a red tile one, for the thin blue plumes of wood-fire smoke to feather over. There is something to my mind specially sheltering and cozy in the look of thatch, cut away over the windows, level yet spiky like a rustic's hair on a fair-day or holiday; I like it none the less if it be sponged and padded here and there with green crystallised moss. Greek and Roman workers are all very well, but they seem fools, in my Downshire mind, to the brave souls that devised those hearty lovable Tudor cottages, built of stone, warm and lasting, scornful of the weather, that mellow them to the exact tone and crustiness of the outside of a Stilton, and covers them with lichens all in orange blots, and frosty patches, and grey scales and shadings, to the top ridge of the breathing chimney where the starlings chatter and twist their glistening necks in a coquettish and fantastic way. I honour those wise and comfortable thinkers in ruffs and doublets, who devised the Tudor cottages of Ramshire, with their porches so hospitable and kindly in cold and rain, and their strong mulioned windows so free to the air and light yet so lordly-looking, and so good for children to look out of, and old men to bask in. I like to see the little cottage beehives in the garden, among the cloves, carnations, and roses, with their little bee merchants dragging down all the flowers around. I like to hear, in the evenings when the moon has a golden halo round it, as if it were melting into shapeless brightness, the drag and tinkle of the spades at work in the cottage garden, just beyond the vicar's laurels, where the thrushes are rehearsing for their daybreak concert.

The high downs, too, are my special delight; not those that rise in broad green shoulders on either

side the road, shutting out all horizon; not those, though they are in places as high as sea cliffs, or sown and bunched with thousands of primroses, and pendent with long deer's-tongue or the branching feathers of fern, where the twisted beech-roots are velveted with green moss, and where the violets carpet the ground under the pied hazel-boughs which just now are tasselled with catkins. No! these are the low downs that rapidly turn into the trim fields and cattle-dappled pastures of ordinary civilisation, and from them, down in the low country, you may in the distance see the train, which four hours hence will be in London, passing along, with a running smoke of steam like fire running along a train of gunpowder. I like the high downs where the horizon is a dim blue one of twenty miles' distance, far as a ship can be seen at sea. I like the prairie grasp and comprehension of those high Ramshire Downs, black with furze, lined with plantations, studded with sheep, alive with rabbits; the keen, thin blue air vocal with plovers and blithe choruses of larks.

You are not in solitude or uncheered there, for on the high roads you meet the Autolycheus tramp on his eleemosynary progress from Deveril to Todminster; now and then, some soldiers on leave, with their wallets behind them; carriers and flour-waggons, and that scarlet-runner, the reckless mail cart; not to mention chance travellers, clergymen on their rounds, and, in the season, red seeds of fox-hunters on their way to covert—to Railton-Spinney, or Waterdyke Corner. Nor can you go half a mile without some dozens of rabbits charging with timid temerity across the road, so swiftly that you see little but a flirt of white tail near the furze-bush, as they disappear like Roderick Dhu's clansmen. You know that every thorn-bush you pass, is peopled. Then the blackbirds run like rats about the thorn-bushes, or break out with a chink and flutter, as if in their conceit each bird thought the whole world specially in pursuit of him. Or perhaps, if you tread softly on the turf, you will be amused by coming on one of those blind diplomatists, the mole, like a little roll of black velvet. Then, on the fallows beyond the downs, you will see the crested plover, with his white belly and dark wings, swooping about, and making signals of distress with that strange "peewit" note which I think I could imitate on the violin; and then, like a dark star, falls the lark from heaven, or rises, trembling, to the cloud; while the new-come cuckoo echoes his own name in the fir wood that pulses with the lulling murmurs of the wild doves, where the squirrel curls in his nest, and the great black raven tolls out his sullen croak, as if a friendly lamb were seriously ill in the neighbourhood, and his benevolent mind were troubled by his friend's indisposition.

But these are all episodic pleasures of the high downs, for the standing dish of delight is the incomparable glory of the far distance, with its heavenly radiance of cloudy blue, and its

softened glimmer of pearly colour, neither grey, nor blue, nor opal, but a union of all, with many inner depths and glories to be wrought out only by the patient and loving eye.

I am no great believer in the poetry of sheep (uncooked), nor in lamb (without mint-sauce), but in Ramshire the sheep do throw themselves about the landscape as if they were trained to group themselves effectively—as my friend, Medochre, R.A., says. They sprinkle down the dun slopes, they cascade down the sides of the lanes, they come smoking along the dusty roads, they bleat in great multitudes. They are seen melting away in little yellow and brown spots, into the fairy azure of that magical distance through which glimmer pieces of green corn, brown fallows, golden stacks, white veins of chalk, greystone patches, emerald pastures, dun mounds of firs, and dark thickets of almond-scented furze, that, gradually getting thinner and thinner, break at last into single specks and dots of bushes which variegates the down as with an eruption of mole-hills.

Add to these variations of surface, some firs in the foreground, like the teeth of a small tooth-comb; some round chalk basins cut by the shepherds to catch water; some grassy mounds of an old Roman camp, rising in triple terrace one above the other; and you have some idea of the higher downs taken in their generalities. To describe them in detail would take a year: for the beauty of their atmospheric changes alone are infinite and wonderful.

But can I leave the Down country, with its quivering blue horizon, out of which the eye gradually evolves long funeral processions of firs; little toy farm-houses, so small in the distance that they are no bigger than a giant could carry on the palm of his hand (I mean a small giant, because, of course, a great giant like Brandyborax or Aldeboron has a palm to his hand as big as Salisbury Plain); grey spires, sharp and small as darning-needles; black specks of furze and bramble; and lesser specks, where glossy crows feed, or vibrate their wings—must I, I say, leave the high downs without describing the little stone tea-caddy of a Downshire church, built by that worthy but noseless man whose battered mummy of an effigy still lies, in a patient but ill-used way, on a flat tomb in the chancel?

I like the simple church, with the dial over the porch, erased by time. It is old as the Normans, I should think, that square tower, so massy and low, firm as the rock, so palanxed and solid in its imperturbable immovability. The sunshine wanders over it, the rain beats it, the wind torments it, but it remains as it has stood for centuries. The green waves of that dead sea around the yew-tree, rise and fall, century after century, but the tree is fixed as the good ship's mast: and daily casts its moving shadow into the chancel to flicker about the latticing of sun and shade, as with the movement of passing wings.

There are many country moments when the

songs of birds sound sweet from their very strangeness, and arrests the attention from its intrusion on scenes with which it has never been associated. I like to lie abed early on a spring morning, and hear all the sounds of life outside the window that cheer but do not disturb you, so that you fall into a doze of spring-time thoughts, as you are trying to listen, until you are made broad awake by the fuller chorus of young thrushes in the laurels, who seem to be practising in a Hullah class, perpetually put right by the fuller voices of the parent birds; but, best of all, I like to hear on Sunday, in the Downshire church, between the pauses of the psalm and the hushes in the Litany, the response of the vicar's blackbirds coming in as if they had been trained, like little choristers, in God's great open-air cathedral.

Your contemplative Jacques, too, can find pretty employment in the oak coverts that here and there strew the surface of Downshire, very aviaries of song in the pleasant May-time, when even at noonday the nightingale may be heard gurgling out rich soprano passages. There, the negro blackbird, with the orange-bill, repeats his musical monotone, and the thrush flings forth his lavish, careless carolling upon the blue spring air. There, the robin, with breast stained ever since that "dreadful murder" of the Children in the Wood, bides his time, when in autumn he shall flaunt it on the Downshire lawns. Let us enter the covert through a fir wood, where, through straight rough-scaled stalks, oozing balmy tears, spots of moving sunlight flicker about on the dry pale leaves of last year, here and there brightened where an angel's visit of clear light from Heaven pours through and irradiates some churlish bramble, for all the world like woman's love hallowing some unworthy object: some Caliban of a husband, some Quilp, some ideal Cymon.

From these delights, I stroll botanising to the fretful nettles—their white flowers soon to be black with bees—that edge the outer skirts of the fox covert, where the waterproof buds of the chesnut are throwing off their macintoshes, and the beech is unrolling his sharp-spiked buds; where the pied hazel is fluttering its green-winged rods, and the banks are strewn with primroses—those daylight stars, soft green where the transparent leaves hood them in like nuns, soft gold in the sunlight and paler in the shadow; where radiant bunches of violets purple the moss that wads the walks and velvets it for little fairy feet. Or, I find amusement in tracking the wood-pigeon to his nest by the piles of split beech-nuts under the selected fir; or, in judging that I could find a squirrel in his hammock up aloft when I see a plateful of nibbled nut-shells under the tall larch, gay with its tender pink blossoms; or, could I pursue the brook that lurks reedily among the trees, I might discover that eccentric angler, the heron, sitting on his nest, with his two legs hanging through, like a wooden-legged midshipman up in a man-of-

war's cross-trees. If I had ornithological skill, I would seek out that feathered attorney, the cuckoo, and turn him out of the hedge-sparrow's estate that he has unlawfully seized; or, I would hunt for rare birds. Then there are broader tracks of the covert, where the grim oaks stretch out their muscular arms defiantly, and tie themselves in robust knots, where the clean-rinded beech has belts of dark moss and spots of feathery emerald, which look like the green plush stolen from a duck's neck, mixed up with snatches of the living emerald from the eyes of a peacock's fan. Then, there are huge antlered bushes of ash, strong and vigorous, butting the meek dog-rose and the scrubby elder; and here and there among the spiked thorn-bushes whose snow is not yet in the bloom, there are flowers of burning gold, kingcups whose nectar the bee drinks thirstily; and when you turn the corner of a wood walk, there is a stinging buzz of startled flies, and a great black humble-bee flies at you like a bullet; and this gay buzz and sense of life in every square inch of air, is, I think, one of the most joyous and delicious symptoms of warm spring weather, especially when you add to it over and above, a perpetual pulsation of cooing doves, a contest of birds, and a general unfurling and unpacking of the little green fairy dresses that are hereafter to be called leaves, and will eventually club together to form the shroud of poor dead King Summer.

Then, you startle a great raven from a tree where he sits complaining of the exorbitant price of mutton at Ramsbury market, and you come out in the open where some moles are making a small parody of that useful but mouldy institution, the Thames Tunnel, and you emerge in a small glade, with a view through oak boughs, barred with sun and shadow, of a great slope of down, miles away, with a long slate roof shining in the sun, a cascade of sheep, and in front a green square of meadow where some cows are on their knees in flowers, that look from here like a gold carpet, woven without seam, perfect from the top throughout.

It has been a glorious day in Downshire; the merry wind driving about the cool wavering shadows; the cuckoo echoing in the woods at Colonel Hanger's, where the pheasants cluck and strut, proud of their fat, of their market value, and of the brazen lustre of their fiery and emeraldine plumage—no great things at a poulterer's door, but here, in the living sunshine, flashing past us exquisitely. The wind has been blowing the dust along the glaring white roads in smoking simooms, the swallows have been glimmering and crescenting about the water meadows, like so many wild horses, and now I am standing on the dewy lawn of my little country inn—the Three Crows—in the evening, watching the stars light up their little diamond illumination lamps in honour of a young May moon, just at the full.

"Now, the moon," says the landlord, coming out with his white yard of clay and a burning

Waterloo charge of bird's-eye, to be sociable with his guest, "seems to me like a bit of butter that is beginning to melt on a hot toastess."

THE MATCH QUESTION.

OUR French scientific friends are seriously turning their thoughts to the tender subject of "Lucifers, or No Lucifers." From the extreme cheapness and the extreme convenience of lucifers, they swarm, like the frogs in Egypt, in every chamber and, what is worse, in every kitchen. They intrude into your house, and into your bedroom, and upon your bed and under it, and into ovens, and into kneading-troughs. They fall into coffee and into soup, and cause many lamentable poisonings, unintentionally; they are so close at hand, and their presence excites so little suspicion, that they afford a ready means to unnatural relatives of getting rid of their encumbrances, to malignant persons of destroying their enemies, and to the lovesick and desponding of making an end of their sweethearts and themselves, intentionally. And there is no known antidote to the poison.

In the north especially of France, lucifers, or "allumettes chimiques" as they are called, are scattered broadcast over the land; they are sold by millions and billions in slight paper boxes to which a piece of sand paper is attached, as if, to increase their dangerousness. Tobacco-smokers carry them loose, in their waistcoat-pockets, in their trousers-pockets, in their coat-pockets; they are strewn about, in a way which looks as if it were done purposely rather than carelessly, in passages, on staircases, in outhouses, and stables, amongst straw, sawdust, shavings, leaves. In any third class railway carriage, in any public wheel-conveyance, in any barge or boat in the northern provinces, you have only to ask your neighbour for an allumette to have half a dozen placed at your disposal. The lucifer is a sort of common property to which every one present has a claim, as much as to the loaf of bread lying on the table at which he dines. It is the favourite plaything of children, the indispensable necessary of adults, pervading every place where men either labour or congregate. Need it be stated that fires, both casual and incendiary, are frequent? The only wonder is that houses in France are not annually decimated by the devouring agent—since it is no longer called an element. In short, lucifer matches have risen to the distinction of being one of the greatest plagues of life. The Grand Exhibitions of London and Paris showed what extensive proportions their manufacture had attained in the German States—the land of insatiable smokers: and it is increasing.

Naturally, people with a little common sense are uneasy at this state of things. Exhortations to prudence, recommendations, reproaches, and sermonising, have been attended with—the effects that might be expected from them. Phosphoric poisonings, and unexpected and unac-

countable fires, are of no rarer occurrence than heretofore. It was thought, for a moment, that a remedy might be found in the employment of unusual preparations of phosphorus; but the cheapness of the old lucifers made them victorious. Even if they had not driven their rivals out of the market by lowness of price, the mere trouble of fetching the new invention from unaccustomed shops was sufficient to make thoughtless people indifferent to what did not fall in with their private convenience, though it might with the public and general security. Thus, the Match Question becomes of growing importance, in its relations both to social economy and to public health. It nearly rivals the Italian Question in more than one particular.

Amongst the dangers attending these little fire-generators, one which is little known, and of which slight, if any, warning has been given, is their liability to spontaneous combustion. No prudent person will keep them in his house, except in incombustible vessels or boxes, such as those made of earthenware, metal, or stone. If this precaution could be insisted upon, it would almost go to the complete suppression of matches tipped with white phosphorus, i. e. that which is white before it is coloured artificially. But what have we to replace this popular method of rubbing a light? Therein lies the difficulty. True, we still have red or amorphous phosphorus; but this is not easy to obtain pure. Moreover, it is, perhaps, not quite so innocent as it pretends to be. An opinion has already been expressed that white phosphorus may be regenerated or reproduced; that is to say, that red phosphorus may, with time, resume its original molecular state, and consequently recover all its chemical and organoleptic properties. But, as long as no fact of poisoning or setting fire to houses can be justly laid to the charge of red phosphorus, we may continue to employ it as we have hitherto done, when we can get it.

All things considered, therefore, it seems possible that persons who do not like being grilled in their beds to a delicate brown, will have to return, for safety's sake, to the prosaic tinder-box, the primitive flint and steel, which, nevertheless, as Monsieur Bautigny (d'Évreux) observes, is not without its poetry, and might furnish matter for a long natural philosophical canto. The bard of the tinder-box could attune his harp to beds of silex, its different varieties, its formation, its relative age, its extraction; then he could strike the chords of iron ore, mines, smelting-houses, and forges. Coal, its origin, and its excavation, would most suitably be sung in a minor (or a miner) key; while steel would afford occasion for a dashing passage in all the sharps. Tinder opens the door for a pleasant excursion throughout the whole range of vegetable tissues; its immersion in azotate of potash leads the way to a brilliant chemical episode. With the flint and steel in hand and the tinder-box beneath them, the poet cannot strike a light without touching on some of the most

thorny questions of physical science; he is fairly launched on the full stream of the Correlation of Physical Forces. He strikes away; a spark falls. It is the transformation of motion into heat. His peroration, his coda, his grand winding up of the symphony, is composed of the production of heat and light by the combustion of steel in the oxygen of atmospheric air, the combustion of the organic tissue of the tinder favoured by the oxygen of the azotate, the decomposition of the azotate, the disengagement of oxide of azote, and the formation of water, carbonic acid, and carbonate of potash. Who would have thought that a tinder-box contained all this? It is evident that, in a scientific point of view, flint and steel have no reason to envy phosphoric lucifers, while in other respects they are greatly their superiors; the tinder-box poisons nobody, and sets fire to nobody's house.

At the mention of suppressing lucifer matches, it may be remarked, for the hundredth time, that if we once begin to suppress everything that may possibly prove injurious, we shall have to proscribe almost everything which is subservient to our daily wants; such as knives, coal, wine, spirituous liquors, and kitchen fires, to which may be added the upper stories of dwelling-houses, seeing that people may kill themselves therefrom by jumping out of the window—and also wells, because you may drown yourself therein, purposely or accidentally. But the objection may be refuted in half a word: there are some things which offer more advantages than dangers; others, on the contrary, offer more dangers than advantages. Lucifers are in the latter case; consequently, they ought to be got rid of.

How? Our Gallic allies propose to do it by a coup d'état, through the agency of the imperial government. It is clear that so long as "allumettes chimiques" are made by their present makers, and sold at their present prices, no consideration, advice, or prohibition will be in the least available to check their use. Now, in France, there are articles—videlicet, tobacco and gunpowder—of which the government has the exclusive monopoly, deriving from them a considerable revenue. The state alone is allowed to manufacture them, and sells them at its own prices, having no rival or competitor. There can be no snuff-mill erected in the next street, no powder-mill built on the neighbouring heath, to affect either article in the market. Any private enterprise of the kind is contrary to law, and would be put down as instantly and as severely as an establishment for the coining of bad money, or the forging of bank-notes. The French government is, therefore, prayed to include alimettes chimiques amongst its monopolies, to manufacture them exclusively, and to sell them by its own agents, of which it has a complete and organised body dispersed over the whole surface of the empire, in the shape of the Débits de Tabac, or tobacco-shops, which are government appointments, wide-spread objects of patronage, given, in the majority of cases, to

the widows of military men. Only the other day, a batch of colonels' reliefs were promoted to tobacco-shops that brought in from one to two hundred sterling per annum; whilst lone ladies of lower rank were provided for in less productive establishments. If it be thought that the state has plenty to do without entering into this new line of business, there still remains the easy expedient of imposing a new and heavy tax.

It is urged that the evil complained of lies, not so much in the use of lucifers, as in their abuse; in the prodigality with which everybody employs and wastes them, in consequence of their extreme cheapness. Practically, one lucifer, half a dozen lucifers, is of no money value whatever. An instantaneous light is a good, a convenient thing to have—sometimes a thing of urgent necessity. There is no reason why it should not be obtainable by prudent persons, who light, perhaps, not more than five or six matches a week, while there is great reason why it should not be come-at-able by careless fellows, who will burn you a box or more per day, to light their pipes. If every box cost five shillings, for instance, it is probable that lucifers would be used with a very different degree of economy to what they are now. They would, at least, be kept out of the way of children. But, without fixing so high a price, which might interfere with the utilitarian use of lucifers, if a box cost only a shilling, only sixpence, the prudential result would be obtained; private economy would become the guardian of public safety.

Any similar check on the abuse of lucifers must be worked out in England by different means. We do not abuse lucifers so much as the French; still we do abuse them a little. Also, we have more need of lucifers than the French, in aid of our daily household requirements. In France, where very little coal is burnt, but a great deal of turf and wood, a light is obtainable at many hours when it is not so with us, by means of an ordinary brimstone match. On retiring to rest, fires are not put out; but are covered with the ashes, which are allowed to accumulate from week to week. The heat thus retained is generally sufficient to light a fire next morning without further aid except a little blowing, and consequently more than sufficient to ignite a common match tipped with sulphur only.

As to the imposition of a new tax: the state, in any case, must have money to oil its machinery and keep it going; the lucifer tax might help to relieve the nation from some more objectionable impost, which it would not be difficult to indicate. What mother would complain of a tax which kept such terrible toys out of her children's hands? What householder would grumble at paying a premium which would be the most efficient of all fire insurances? In any case the subject merits serious consideration. Neither persons nor property ought to remain at the unlimited mercy of a material so dangerous in malevolent hands, and which, by the merest

negligence, may produce such dreadful consequences.

To save us from falling back on the venerable tinder-box of our forefathers, two French gentlemen, Messieurs Devilliers and Dalemagne, have invented a harmless match, to which they have given the fanciful name of "Allumettes Androgynes," or Androgynous Matches. They have yielded to the public in France their privileges as patentees, but not to the public of foreign countries. These matches are tipped at each end with a different composition: you break the match in two, about one-third of its length from the end which *does not* light; you rub the two opposite tips together; and fire is the result. They have the advantage of not being inflammable without the concurrence of the human will; in other words, the match does not light unless people know how to make use of it, in which case it is inflamed instantaneously all by itself, without the aid of any foreign body. It is easily lighted; you may do it with your hands behind you. It offers no danger of poisoning; it does not expose the maker to the sad malady of necrosis or decay of the bone, since the old form of phosphorus does not enter into its composition. It is prepared very rapidly, by a cold process, without employing any combustible, which is a great safeguard against fire or explosion; and lastly, it is made so cheaply, that any intelligent workman with a capital of eight or ten shillings may set up in France as a manufacturer of the androgynous match. Unfortunately, there is a little dispute as to whether red phosphorus is open to the public. The Messrs. Coignet (Brothers) and Company protest to the contrary, asserting that they are the proprietors of a patent for the transformation of white into amorphous phosphorus.

An association of partners, calling themselves La Compagnie Générale, have manufactured matches which have the advantage of containing neither phosphorus nor other poison, but which, till lately, were open to the reproach of missing fire nine times out of ten. At present they are so much improved, that they light nearly as easily as lucifers. There are, therefore, now in existence five sorts of instantaneous lights: common lucifers, or allumettes chimiques; lucifers made red with phosphorus; androgynous matches; matches with a red-phosphorus grater or rubbing-plate; and the non-poisonous matches of the General Company. The first are incontestably the best, but they are so dangerous that their use is scarcely to be further tolerated unless they are subjected to some administrative precautionary measure. All the matches tipped with a chemical paste light more or less readily according to the hygrometrical state of the air; many a match which is easily ignited when the weather is dry, is inferior to flint and steel when the atmosphere is loaded with moisture. It is a great pity that the tinder-box is not enforced by the army and navy regulations in barracks and on board ship. As soon as the tinder-box is established as an institution, accidents from

fire and intemperance in smoking disappear. Smoking is good, but too much of anything is decidedly bad.

OUR EYE-WITNESS AMONG THE BUILDINGS.

THE residence of your Eye-witness is at the end of a certain row of stuccoed houses in the parish of Marylebone, and in the postal district N.W. The row is entitled and called Lumbago-terrace; but the house is not in a line with the other houses in Lumbago-terrace. It is situated at the eastern extremity of that stronghold of miasma, and projects from the other clammy and exudacious tenements, thus:—Lumbago-terrace is a fine specimen of the architecture of Corinth, as adapted to the necessities of our age and habits. It is well known that the great glare and blaze of sunlight, to which in this country we are perpetually subject, and which dazzles and scorches the inhabitants of our island during the greater portion of the year, is the only drawback of our climate, and the only feature of it which it is necessary to guard against. The architect of Lumbago-terrace, deeply initiated in his subject (as is indeed the case with all his fraternity), and being a profound and original thinker, only considering what is sensible and convenient, and not trammelled by conventional rules (in which respect, also, he resembles the other members of his profession), this gentleman, when he “threw up” the great Corinthian façade in the centre of Lumbago-terrace, found that he had only succeeded in darkening the four centre houses of the row, and that the others, unless he could think of some mode of averting so terrible a calamity, stood a fair chance of having the light of heaven admitted into their drawing and dining rooms. This discovery cost the ingenious Mr. Slack many sleepless nights, and his friends observed—though they did not know the cause—that a cloud was upon his sprightly soul.

But one day when Slack had entertained a numerous circle of acquaintances and friends at dinner, it happened that towards the conclusion of the meal—during which he had been unusually silent—the conversation turned upon a certain Grecian temple which one of the company, Sir Benjamin Bigg, a great authority on bells, had recently visited in his travels, and which he described as being composed of a central block, completely shaded from the Grecian sun by a portico. “Aha,” said Mr. Slack, “this is like Lumbago-terrace.”

“Nor,” continued Sir Benjamin, “is this all. This great block of masonry would have been monotonous had it continued in a straight line, and a portico—however large it may be—will only overshadow a certain portion of the building. Now mark the ingenuity of our great Grecian architect—what does he do? He takes back the line of his wings, buries them in a recess behind the great central mass before spoken of, and then throws forward a couple of massive corner buildings at either end of the

pile; themselves kept from the glare by that main pile itself, and immensely helping in their turn to overshadow the receding portions of the wings which I have already described.”

When Sir Benjamin leaned back in his chair after giving this lucid description—which he had illustrated by a diagram drawn with his thumb-nail on the tablecloth—it was observed by the company that a great change came over the demeanour of Slack. Rising from his chair and smiling faintly, he asked permission to retire for a few minutes to his study, from which place he emerged one hour afterwards, bearing in his hand the plan of Lumbago-terrace as it at present stands; a close imitation of the thumb-nail diagram of Sir Benjamin Bigg. It was exhibited to the company and applauded to the echo by all present, except, indeed, one gentleman, who in the frenzied stupidity of his soul, or perhaps under the influence of too much wine, inquired whether a building might not be very admirably adapted to the hot climate and perpetual sunlight of Greece, and yet not be perfectly suited to the peculiar exigencies of Marylebone? This lunatic was, however, promptly put to silence, and was snubbed and discomfited by the enlightened assembly.

Some such principle must have been acted upon in the designing of the different terraces which surround the Regent's Park. The Grecian taste which succeeded the Roman in this country was at its height in the time of that dire Regency, and consequently Grecian pediments, Corinthian capitals, and statues after the antique models, are to be found in the Regent's Park. There is, indeed, one terrace nearly allied to that of Lumbago, in which the genius of the architect seems to have come out, in the invention of a wholly new and original style, such as in the annals of building has never been known before, and concerning which there seems reason to entertain a frisky and joyous hope that it may never be known again. It was our hint to speak in the last number in high terms of the cupola, or dome, which roofs so nobly the cathedral of St. Paul; also, of a small version of this same cupola as it appears on the National Gallery, and on the London University. What words are left to us in which to treat of such a phenomenon as a terrace of dwelling-houses ornamented with little cupolæ or domes, out of the top of each of which grows that last resource of decorative ingenuity, a spike? This terrace is an exception to the Grecian character of the rest of the Regent's Park, and is hideous enough to make it surprising that it has not been copied elsewhere.

That stucco, if it is a necessity, is a very dreary one! It has a chill and cheap appearance. It will peel off in bulgy blisters, and will turn green, and in either of these conditions it presents a gloomy and ruinous appearance, suggestive at once of insolvency and rheumatism. The Regency was a great period of revival in the history of stucco, and in the park and street named in commemoration of the reign of George the Regent, this peculiar kind of compo is in its

glory. What visions of dwarf magnificence of cheap and cracking splendour, of unsupported sponginess and crumbling insecurity, rise up before the mind that recalls that thoroughfare from Waterloo-place to Langham Church: a triumph of littleness, of base and misplaced economy! The great thoroughfare, a mile or so long, is a standing monument of warning against a half-done work. It is a warning against compromise, and against a fearful acceptance. Whatever we accept at all we should accept thoroughly, boldly, and with all that it involves. This truth is more important than it seems, and there are other things at stake in connexion with it besides the beauty and stability of our town. To accept a great scheme, but to stunt and clip it in its development, is a timid and miserable weakness, yet one into which we in this country are very apt to fall. An enormous outlay, consistently, unflinchingly, but judiciously disbursed, is the way to secure enormous repayment. A timid outlay, a half-liberality, is always extravagant and unremunerative. But it will be asked what are you to do if you have not the means of making this great venture, and of carrying the splendid design splendidly out? The answer is a simple one. It is the history of many of the greatest achievements which the world has known—Persist. Adopt the plan, carry out as much of it as you can carry out perfectly, and go on adding to it as your means allow. Or, if the thing to be performed must of necessity be done quickly, then it is necessary to make a great sacrifice of means at once, holding on till the repayment comes, or else to do as great traders do—mortgage the future, and become hampered with a temporary loan in the full confidence of an ultimate triumph.

Comparison, though odious, is the surest of tests—nay, perhaps it is because of its sureness in that capacity that it is odious. Let any one remember his first walk down Regent-street after a return from Paris, and he will at once see how far the English thoroughfare is from being what it ought to be. Nay, compare this street with some recently built, or some portions of those recently built, in the City. This business-like part of our capital furnishes an example in this respect to the gay West-end.

The splendour of a street depends greatly on height in the houses of which it is composed. Nay, what is more remarkable yet, a street bordered by low houses will not look even so wide, as one of the same breadth whose houses are high. A large room which is lofty, will look larger than a room the same size which has a low ceiling; and a tall man who is very stout as well as tall, will look taller than a man of the same height who is thin. The immense houses in Cannon-street by no means narrow that thoroughfare, but, on the contrary, add to its spaciousness of appearance, and seem, strangely enough, to afford a breathing space of greater magnitude than is afforded by the dwarfed habitations in Regent-street. The tall houses seem to fetch down, and enclose for your

use, a larger space of air than the short ones do. You take no account of the air above the house-tops.

In reviewing the past history, the present condition, and the future prospects, of what may be called the domestic architecture of our town, it is impossible not to be struck with the conviction of a dire decline, and a recent revival of taste. The old specimens which still remain in different parts of our town—we should have many more but for that fatal fire—the old gabled houses of the Elizabethan time, projecting forward story by story to the top of the house, are picturesque and delightful. In the time which succeeded—the Whitehall period—there is still infinite satisfaction to be derived from the grey stone buildings, ornamented with stone garlands, or sometimes even with palms of glory tied together by the handles. There is a certain mansion so decorated, facing the Green Park, and next on the north side to the palace of the Earl of Ellesmere. The palms lie underneath a circular window in the middle of the pediment; the whole effect of which arrangement is admirable, as is indeed everything about that house, with its stone pillars, its terrace with balustrades, and—most attractive of all decorations—its atmosphere of past associations gathering before it and beautifying its every stone. Let any one turn his back for a moment on this building, and look across at Buckingham Palace, and he will see that mere size is not alone and in itself impressive. There are such houses as this Green Park mansion, in nooks and corners about London, that you light upon by chance after a thirty years' residence in the town. At the bottom of Davies-street, and not many yards from the Berkeley-square end of Mount-street, there is one of these out-of-the-way houses, of a period probably just after that last named, and which is called Bourdon House. For a compact and jovial little lump of masonry, this quaint mansion, with its red-brick facings, its high roof, and its little enclosed court-yard of trees, has hardly its equal anywhere.

In the time of Anne, and afterwards, when the rows of red-brick houses, with white sashes to the windows which are flush with the wall, prevailed, there was still a comfortable and solid look about the streets which was pleasant to the eye. Such rows of houses are to be seen in Queen-square, Bloomsbury; in King's Bench-walk, Temple; and in many other localities. If destitute of pretension to beauty, they are still pleasant to look at, and infinitely refreshing in comparison with the race of uncharacteristic tenements which succeeded them, and with a consideration of which this paper began.

It is a pleasant thing to know that we are now, architecturally speaking, in a hopeful way; not only in the matter of Public Buildings, but in the generally improved taste which shows itself here and there in individual houses, and which tells us plainly that were our town to build again, we should have no more such streets as Regent-street, no more such squares as Trafalgar-square.

The new buildings in the City, to which allusion has been made, go far to prove this. The London Restaurant at the corner of Chancery-lane is a good specimen of them, and is in every way a fine and handsome edifice. The silver plate warehouse on Cornhill, too, is in itself a really handsome building. The National Discount Company's Office in the same street, the New Central Telegraph Station opposite the Exchange, the new offices and houses in Mincing-lane, and some in Fenchurch-street—all these, and many more, give unmistakable signs of a move in the right direction even when there is something left to be desired in the matter of taste. But perhaps the most successful of all these City efforts at improved architecture is to be found in Bridge-street, Blackfriars, at the Crown Life Office. Allowing for the mediæval treatment which has been adopted, and which prevents it from being a perfect example of the manner of our own day, this house may be considered an almost perfect specimen of its kind.

Nor is the movement which has taken place in the City, and which makes it bid fair to become a city of palaces in due time, altogether unrepresented at the West-end also. Besides the splendour of some of the new buildings about New Kensington, and Palace Gardens; besides our more recent clubs, some of which, and the Carlton—especially, are very good—the Carlton would be nearly faultless, but for the incongruity between the polished marble columns and the rough stone-work at the door, which looks as if it were placed there to tear the coat-tails of the members as they go in and out—besides such mansions as that recently completed for Mr. Holford in Park-lane, and which, with all its splendour, by-the-by, does not give one half the pleasure which the neighbouring house belonging to Lord Ward affords to the passer-by—besides all these, there are other and still more recent evidences of an awakening of improved taste in our London builders. Before the late revivals in taste, such a house as that situated at No. 114, Piccadilly, could never have been built. Its richness of ornament, its Gothic windows, and the striking effect of the black marble introduced about them, are remarkable and beautiful, and but for the want of anything suggestive of our own day, would be perfectly satisfactory.

The improvement needed, however, is on a larger scale; and certain attempts at a decorative style conducted at a less costly rate of expenditure, are publicly of greater value and importance. At the corner of Duke-street and Buckingham-street, Adelphi, there is a house which, made of cheap materials arranged in a fashion which is picturesque and agreeable, is in every way an interesting and important essay. There are other such buildings in Southampton-street, Strand, and in Endell-street. In these houses, coloured and decorated tiles have been introduced with admirable effect, lighting up the whole structure, and setting smoke and dirt at defiance by reason of their glazed surface, from which every speck is washed away by the first shower of rain.

The defect of these houses seems to be a certain hot and foxy colour, which is attributable to the combination of occasional red bricks with the yellowish brown ones. There is a white or stone-coloured brick now in use—used in the new buildings in the City, and in some of the recent West-end improvements, as in the houses just completed in South Audley-street—which has a much more agreeable colour than the ordinary West Drayton brick, and which, with the addition of stone copings, or even of such tiles as those used in the Adelphi house, would be very pleasant and cheerful in its effect. These stone-coloured bricks require something to break their monotony. The effect of a red-brick house pointed with stone-coloured mortar is, as we all know, very good; why not reverse this, and try a house of stone-coloured bricks with mortar stained of a red tint? Supposing this to be impossible, the introduction of some red bricks among the grey, or, as has been said just now, of real stone copings, or decorated tiles, is very agreeable. The superiority of the light-coloured bricks to stucco is in every way great: as they are, to begin with, of a pleasanter tint, and are a real thing, while the other is a counterfeit.

Would it be impossible to use a kind of glazed tiles, or bricks, with their external side-glazed, for the main surfaces of a house? The advantage gained in a town like London would be enormous. Dirt would be slow to lodge on such a surface, and, supposing it had lodged there, a shower of rain would cleanse the whole house. Surely such an experiment would be worth trying.

It is impossible to deny that the appearance of the outsides of the houses which you pass in the course of your walk, has a considerable effect on the animal spirits, and that he who really takes pains with the external part of his place of abode to make it look cheerful and pretty, is conferring a benefit on society at large. Much may be done in this way by a judicious breaking up of the house front with verandahs, jalousies, and Venetian blinds; nay, the pattern of your muslin curtains as they show through the plate-glass, the flowers philanthropically placed in the windows, the broad plate of brass on which the half-blinds of your bedrooms run, all these things contribute to make the house look delightful, and to convey a good impression of you—its unknown proprietor—to the passer-by. There is a certain house in Berkeley-street, the thoroughfare which leads from Piccadilly to Berkeley-square, which surely few of us ever pass without a sensation of pleasure. It is the last house next to the stables which occupy the larger portion of the street in question, and having no architectural pretensions, is a triumph of what may be done with almost any habitation, by means of balconies, plate-glass, bright paint, and here and there a touch of gilding.

Let us hope that we shall lose no more opportunities of improving London. We have already missed some grand chances. What a chance was lost when the thoroughfare which used to go by the name of the New-road was allowed to fall into the hands of unrestricted builders,

who did as they pleased with the valuable ground which borders that line of road! A great and important means of communication between the City and the western extremity of London, situated at a convenient distance from the centre of the town and its public offices, accessible to the fresh air which comes down with little interruption from Hampstead and Highgate, this site was one possessed of peculiar advantages, and, bordered on either side by trees and houses set back in gardens away from the noises of the Road, might have been one of the most attractive places of residence in London, and, at the same time, a splendid feature in our capital. But to have organised such a Boulevard, it is necessary that the whole arrangement should have been under wise superintendence and restrictions. The buildings which line either side of the New-road have sprung up by degrees, have been built by different contractors, at different times, and on different scales of expenditure. Let us follow the history of this thoroughfare from the beginning.

The New-road does, in the course of its career, play many parts. Starting in life, at the Finsbury extremity, as a prosperous tradesman, it very soon, on getting through a certain turnpike-gate which separates it from the City, seems to pass in some way the bounds of the respectable, and deteriorates sadly. It becomes a stick-vendor, an apple-stall proprietor, a potato-can holder, a sixpenny photograph purveyor, and is pervaded generally by a hand-to-mouth character which is anything but prepossessing. At this point of his career, too, certain tavern-haunting propensities are conspicuous, and Eagle Taverns, Grecian Saloons, and Jacob's Wells (which are not filled with water), at once account for, and prey upon, his poverty. Emerging at length from this degraded condition, our friend has—as will happen to those who fall into low habits—for some time an up-hill career of it. He makes tremendous efforts at respectability, pretends a fondness for water drinking, assumes a spurious benevolence in surrounding himself with infirmaries—always for some specially unpleasant form of suffering—builds Penitentiaries, and a Dissenting Chapel or two. It will not do, however, and when he has been at this sort of thing for some time, he suddenly finds that he is going down hill very fast, and that it is necessary that something should be done to keep him on the road at all. He enters accordingly on all sorts of lucrative, but squalid, undertakings; lends himself to chandlery; goes in more than ever for photography, in which he has always been more or less concerned; makes fresh arrangements with omnibus companies; sets up as a clothier on Battle-bridge, painting his name on every wall and gate within twenty miles of London, and exhibiting pendent mechanics' suits of moleskin clothing, to entrap the engineers and stokers from the neighbouring railway. There is no end to his energy and to the struggles he makes at this particular time, or to the success which might have attended him if he had gone on. But it is not in his nature. The

worst part of his character is, that as soon as he has got a little money together he *will* always retire and play the gentleman. This he does, immediately after displaying the commercial spirit just mentioned, and, beyond some dealings with Morison's pills, an occasional transaction in dentistry, a certain amount of photographic performance, and some small dealings in the tobacco line, he may be said to live for a while quite in retirement. Whether it is that these means of living are more lucrative than they appear, it is not easy to say, but he suddenly builds a church, richly ornamented with caryatides, and retires into a handsome square. Here, one would think, might naturally come a termination of his career. No such thing; there are all sorts of new trials, new successes, and new failures in store for him. After enjoying his retirement in the Square for some little time, he seems again to become straitened in his resources, or to exceed his income, and once more contracts very much in his ideas and habits. But even this economy, and the arrangement with the omnibus company, which is the only commercial undertaking he has kept up, proving insufficient to bring him round, he is actually—and at a comparatively advanced period in his career—compelled once more to have recourse to business transactions on a large and varied scale. It is melancholy to see him obliged, at this advanced age, to struggle like a mere beginner. He sets up more photographic establishments than ever. He goes into small ways of business, as well as large. He sells zinc baths, and distorted chimneys, at the same time that he purveys fried fish, sweetmeats, and confectionary plums; he lets out ladders, so tall that the tops of them are quite dim, for hire; he keeps coffee-shops, with gigantic teapots and symmetrical chops in the window; he enters into relations with other roads communicating with other parts of the town and with Hampstead; he mixes his commerce (having always a philanthropic turn) with soup kitchens, and does a good deal also in the tavern business, for which he has from time to time frequently manifested a considerable liking. There is no end to our friend's efforts at this particular time of his life, and, from a menagerie where you can get a silver pheasant, to a confectioner's shop where you can solace yourself with a penny ice, there is nothing that he does not provide you with. Nor does he hesitate to break forth into new exertions in the stone-masonry line. He lays himself out to captivate, with stone lions, with copies of the antique in the same material, with griffins, shepherdesses, and drinking-fountains. Nor is the cemeterial part of this exhilarating line of business lost sight of, but, on the contrary, weeping and shivering infants on tombs, broken columns, and polished marble obelisks, are to be found in the wayside studios: not to mention the inverted torch, which would be the aptest emblem of extinguished life that we could have, if it did not happen that when a torch is turned upside down, it usually burns brighter than ever.

The consequence of this tremendous show of

energy in stone-masonry, and in pastrycook shops kept by poor Italians who sell *meringues* at two a penny,—the consequence of all this perseverance and enterprise soon becomes sufficiently obvious in the unprecedentedly flourishing aspect taken next, by our friend's fortunes. First of all, he builds another church, and then he plunges at once into fashionable life. He makes acquaintances of an aristocratic kind, enlarges his sphere of action to the utmost attainable amount, connects himself with a great national property on the one side, and with the mansions of the nobility (towards which he advances with a graceful curve) on the other; he becomes mixed up with the aristocratic families of Portland, Harley, and Wimpole; and is admitted to association on almost equal terms with those great people; he offers entertainment to the Duke of Brunswick, and then builds another church, dedicated to St. Marie la Bonne, and then a workhouse, with a drinking-fountain in its central wall, to afford hospitality to the paupers, and the relatives who come to visit them. After this point, his long career again gives symptoms of decline. For a time he makes tremendous efforts at respectability, but his views are one-sided, and while his right hand is extended towards the better classes of society, his left is intimately clasped by persons of a lower grade. Philanthropic to the last, the subject of this brief memoir erects an expensive establishment in the bath and wash-house department, a lying-in hospital, and a dispensary, and then, retiring into a very quiet way of life indeed, expires in the Edgware-road: having previously set up a son and daughter in business on each side of his final resting-place: the son in the shoemaking way on a very large scale indeed: the daughter in the bonnet line, on a scale of even greater splendour and magnificence.

Such is the history of a thoroughfare left to itself. The experiment is hardly satisfactory. It is not, however, contended that every street and every row of houses should be the result of a conceived plan, but only that some of our main and principal thoroughfares should be. There is no harm in occasional irregularity, if each item that contributes to that irregularity be reasonably good in itself. The irregularity of Park-lane constitutes one of its greatest charms, and that of the row of houses which forms the eastern boundary of the Green Park, and one of which has already been specially indicated, is very delightful. Has the reader ever examined that range of buildings? It is quite unique of its kind. One house, set far back, and with an entrance in Albemarle-street, is red-tiled, like an old manor house; another is roofed with green slate, such as that which covers Kensington Palace—the most delightful of roofs. In fact, these old houses are almost all different; alike, only in looking as if they were far out of London, and in possessing such terraced gardens as it delights one to see, and in which ladies and children walk about and amuse themselves, as if the clubs of St.

James's-street and the bustle of Piccadilly were a hundred miles away.

It is true, then, that irregularity may be, and is, most desirable, more especially in the dwelling-house department of our domestic architecture; but it is also desirable that in the more central portion of our town, and in some one part of it at least, we should have a great show thoroughfare, characterised by a certain degree of symmetry and uniformity of design.

An opportunity has arrived of reclaiming the reputation of our town; such an opportunity as we have, all things considered, never had before. There is one feature of our capital—a natural, not a made advantage—which might gain for it a nobleness and splendour which would set the rival city across the Channel at defiance. A rushing whirl of mud and sewage, a great tide of defilement and pestilence, the Thames is yet the glory of our town: at once its main beauty and its disfigurement. Who that stands one day—as he may—on the Pont Neuf, and the next on Blackfriars-bridge, will fail to see that, in the first case, the town deserves a better river, and that, in the second, the river deserves a better town? London has grown up like a neglected child, much as it liked, without plan, without restrictions; with here and there (as will happen, too, with the child) a fine quality, an agreeable characteristic, and with one great and noble gift of nature.

A plan has been more than once urged upon the notice of parliament, by Sir Joseph Paxton, for the formation of a line of quays on either side of the Thames, extending from the Houses of Parliament to London-bridge; the requisite ground for the purpose being redeemed from the river by embankment. Here, in the very centre and eye of our town, and in connexion with its finest feature, is an opportunity of erecting a thoroughfare which, in the relief it would afford to the streets at present unendurably crowded, would be eminently useful, and might be so ornamental as to alter the whole character of our town, and win for it, by one bold stroke, a great name for something more than mere size, among the cities of the world.

But, to attain this object, it is necessary to go to work in no careless or slipshod way. It will not do to give a bare permission that the thing may be begun, and to leave it to various hands to work the scheme out after their own plans and in their own fashion. If we are to take the improvement of our river in hand to any purpose, we must do it as every successful thing must be done, heartily: not leaving the elimination of the bright gift—it is dull enough now—to ignorance and carelessness, but looking to it, with no half-attentive energies or sluggish purpose, ourselves.

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